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THE
POETICAL WORKS OF
WORDSWORTH

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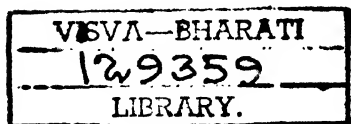
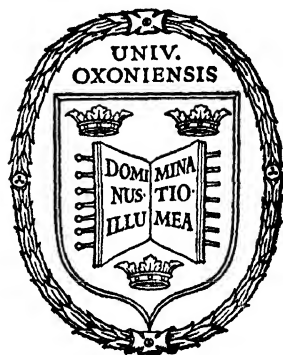
CAPE TOWN IBADAN NAIROBI ACCRA

THE POETICAL WORKS OF WORDSWORTH

With Introductions and Notes

Edited by
THOMAS HUTCHINSON

A New Edition, revised by
ERNEST DE SELINCOURT



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WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Born, Cockermouth, Cumberland . . . 7 April 1770
Died, Rydal Mount, Westmorland . . . 23 April 1850

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*If thou indeed derive thy light from Heaven,
Then, to the measure of that heaven-born light,
Shine, Poet! in thy place, and be content:—
The stars pre-eminent in magnitude,
And they that from the zenith dart their beams,
(Visible though they be to half the earth,
Though half a sphere be conscious of their brightness)
Are yet of no diviner origin,
No purer essence, than the one that burns,
Like an untended watch-fire, on the ridge
Of some dark mountain; or than those which seem
Humbly to hang, like twinkling winter lamps,
Among the branches of the leafless trees;
All are the undying offspring of one Sire:
Then, to the measure of the light vouchsafed,
Shine, Poet! in thy place, and be content.*

PREFACE

IN this Edition of the Poems of William Wordsworth ~~there will be found~~—now for the first time within the compass of a single volume of convenient size and modest price—every piece of original verse which we know to have been published by the poet himself, or of which he can be shown to have authorised the posthumous publication.

The OXFORD WORDSWORTH comprises (1) the *Minor or Miscellaneous Poems*, reprinted from the standard edition of 1849–50—the last issued during the life-time and under the direct authority of the poet; (2) a reprint of the original text of the two Poems of 1793, viz. *An Evening Walk*, and *Descriptive Sketches*; (3) a *Supplement*, giving, so far as it has been possible to ascertain, every piece published by Wordsworth on any other occasion whatsoever, but omitted by him from the final edition of 1849–50; (4) *The Prelude*,¹ or *Growth of a Poet's Mind; an Autobiographical Poem*; (5) *The Excursion* (text of ed. 1849–50); (6) all the *Author's Notes* of ed. 1849–50, together with many notes found in various early editions, but subsequently omitted; (7) sundry *Prefaces, Postscripts, &c.*, given at the end of Vol. V, ed. 1849–50; (8) a *Chronological Table of the Life of Wordsworth*; and (9) some few miscellaneous *Notes* by the Editor, who is also accountable for (10) the *Chronological Data* prefixed to the individual poems.

Great pains have been taken to ensure a high degree of accuracy in the text of this Edition. The poet's use of capital letters—a sure index to his intentions of stress—has been carefully and, it is hoped, in every instance reproduced; but it seemed idle to preserve with scrupulous exactness certain oddities and inconsistencies of spelling—a matter to which Wordsworth, unlike his brother-poet, Walter Savage Landor, appears never to have given serious attention. The editor has throughout compared the punctuation of the standard text of 1849–50 with that of the *Aldine Wordsworth*, issued in 1892.² In most instances of divergence between them he has followed the recent authority; but in a few cases a regard—it may be, a superstitious regard—for the metrical design of the poet has compelled him to revert (not without misgiving) to the pointing of the standard text. Be this as it may, we must always bear in mind the fact that Wordsworth's system of punctuation was no mere logical or intellectual organ, but rather—in the words of the *Aldine* Editor—'an elaborate and ingenious instrument, intended at once to guide the reader to the meaning and to serve a metrical purpose'.

In three places, where a misprint in the text of 1849–50, while not absolutely demonstrable, was yet in the highest degree probable, the Editor has substituted a reading of one or more of the earlier editions, taking care to add in a footnote the precise authority attaching to the adopted reading. On behalf of the change thus introduced into line 3 of *Misc. Son.*, II. xxiv: 'a lamp *sullenly* (vice suddenly) *glaring*,' it will probably suffice to refer the reader to the three passages cited in the footnote on page 211; bidding him add thereto, from *Eccles. Sonnets*, II. xv, line 13: 'Ambition . . . is no *sullen fire*;' and also, from *Inscriptions*, X., lines 27, 28: 'by *sullen* weeds forbidden To resume its native *light*.'³ In defence of '*choral* (vice coral) fountains' (p. 173) it may be observed, first: that Wordsworth was not a writer of nonsense-verses; secondly: that he had a rooted aversion to slipshod grammar, and, in particular, to the very solecism exemplified in the phrase (of text 1849–50), 'coral fountains,' i.e. to the adjectival misuse of a substantive *pur et simple*. We may feel confident that the poet-critic who found fault with W. Rowan Hamilton's phrase: *weariness of that gold sphere*, and remonstrated with R. P. Gillies for having written: *where the lake gleams beneath the autumn*

¹ Published, shortly after the poet's death, in 1850.

² Edited by Edward Dowden, LL.D., &c., &c., Professor of Oratory and English Literature in the University of Dublin.

³ [Mr. T. E. Casson (1926) points out another parallel in 'Guilt and Sorrow' (p. 21), l. 183.]

PREFACE

sun; who vehemently advocated the employment of *vernal* and *autumnal* as being both 'unexceptionable words,' and declared it to be a matter of regret that Miss Seward's bantling, *hyberthal*, was not in more familiar use;—we may, surely, feel quite satisfied that this severe precisian would never have condescended to the vile phrase, *coral fountains*; all the more because, in the words, *fountains coralline*, he had a phrase ready to his hand which (had it but been possible on the score of sense) was undeniably 'unexceptionable,' as well from the metrist's as from the grammarian's point of view. It should be added that the *Aldine* Editor led the way in adopting both readings—*sullenly* and *choral*—into his text.¹ The third instance above referred to (see page 390) calls for no particular comment in this place.

In the extract from Chaucer's *Troilus and Cresida*, contributed by Wordsworth to the volume projected by Thomas Powell in 1840, line 118, as it appears in the original issue of that volume (1841), runs precisely as it runs in Chaucer's original, and as it now runs in the *OXFORD WORDSWORTH*:—

'With a soft voice, he of his Lady dear'—

When, however, in the following year, this extract, along with the poet's other adaptations from Chaucer, was being reprinted for publication amongst his *Collected Poems*, the compositor perpetrated the ludicrous and (one would have thought) quite palpable blunder of foisting in the word 'night' (evidently caught from the expression 'night by night,' which occurs four lines below), between the words 'soft' and 'voice.' From that day to this, the line has run, in every edition of the *Poems*:—

'With a soft night voice, he of his Lady dear'—

an arrangement which obviously yields neither good metre nor common sense. It seems strange that neither Wordsworth himself, nor his clerk and proof-reader, Mr. John Carter, should, while revising the several editions of the *Poems* that appeared between 1842 and 1850, have detected so manifest an error of the press. But we may perhaps suppose that their attention on these occasions was wholly given to Wordsworth's original compositions, and that the text of the adaptations from Chaucer, having been settled once for all, was simply left to take care of itself. Professor Dowden, in a paper read to the Wordsworth Society in May, 1882, was the first to suggest the possibly intrusive character of 'night'; he has, however, retained that word in the text of the *Aldine* Edition (1892). The Editor of the *OXFORD WORDSWORTH*, finding himself unable to conceive the possibility of any difference of opinion as to the true character and origin of 'night' in the line under notice, has summarily removed it from the text, without note, comment or apology of any kind whatsoever.

In a very few instances—possibly not more than half-a-dozen in all—where a passage either of striking beauty or otherwise interesting had been rejected from the text of ed. 1849–50, the Editor has ventured to restore the cancelled lines to their original position, placing them within brackets, to indicate that they form no part of the standard text, and adding in a footnote the precise amount of authority which they derive from the numerous earlier editions. The second stanza of *Louisa* has been replaced after this fashion; so, too, have the opening stanza of *Dion*, and a stanza (originally the sixth) of the *Ode to Duty*. Thus restored, the passages in question are sure to catch the eye of the reader; whereas, had they been relegated to the 'Notes and Illustrations' at the end of the volume, they would necessarily have escaped the notice of that numerous class who read poetry readily enough, but turn with instant aversion from anything in the shape of a Note.

The Minor Poems are here presented in the order in which they stand in ed. 1849–50. The notion of that order or arrangement was, as is well known, first

¹ [But see 'The Triad' (p. 175), l. 11.—T. E. Casson, 1926.]

PREFACE

conceived by Wordsworth in 1812, and, after three years of sedulous elaboration, was finally perfected and embodied by him in the Collective Edition of 1815. To it, despite much ridicule and hostile criticism, the poet adhered with unwavering faith throughout the rest of his life. On this question of arrangement, the Editor is fain to confess, his affections are most humble; he has no ambition to see a goodlier scheme than Wordsworth's. Accordingly, those who purchase the *OXFORD WORDSWORTH* must needs content themselves with the works of the poet arranged according to an antiquated scheme of his own devising. As to the advantages alleged by some to accompany a chronological arrangement of the poems, it will be time enough to discuss them when the materials for the construction of such an arrangement are in our hands. At present, our knowledge of the chronology¹ of the poems is very far from complete; and, accordingly, every attempt to set the poems in their true chronological order must of necessity be largely tentative and conjectural.

In compiling the Chronological Life-Table, the Editor has, of course, freely availed himself of the two great Sources for the Biography of Wordsworth, viz. the *Memoirs* of the poet, published in 1851 by his nephew Christopher, late Bishop of Lincoln, and the *Life* in three volumes by Professor Knight of St. Andrews, published in 1889. Though not very inviting to look at, this Life-Table will, the Editor trusts, be found useful by sundry persons in divers ways. To the old Wordsworthian it will prove convenient for occasional reference; the young reader may pick out thence the leading dates and events of the poet's life; while the more advanced student may, it is hoped, learn by its aid something at least concerning the affinities—moral, poetical and intellectual—which connect Wordsworth with the preceding generation, and with the men of his own troubled and disjointed times.

It may be well to point out that in the *OXFORD WORDSWORTH* no attempt has been made to annotate the poems systematically; nor has the Editor thought it fair to cumber the pages with such information as the student can, without any difficulty, obtain for himself from Biographies, &c., now-a-days within the reach of all. Here and there, in order to facilitate the continuous reading of the poet, the Editor has thrown in a brief footnote, for the most part giving a name or a date referred to in the text; and to these footnotes he has added a very few notes (printed along with the Author's Notes at the end of the volume), to convey some novel suggestion, or else to supply some necessary or interesting fact regarding the text. Beyond this he has not attempted to go. The main object of the Series to which this Edition belongs is to provide the public, not with notes or commentary, but with a thoroughly sound, complete and legible text; and in the volume now before the reader this object, the Editor ventures to believe, has been realised to the fullest extent possible.

In view of the vague and unsettled character of the chronology of much of Wordsworth's poetry, the Editor has deemed it inexpedient to print a formal Chronological Table or List of the Author's Works, such as that given in Vol. VII of the *Aldine* Edition. He has, however, used all diligence in testing the accuracy of the dates here prefixed to the individual poems. In the interest of the student and for purposes of reference, the lines have been numbered throughout the entire volume.

In conclusion, the Editor's best thanks are due to Professor William Knight, LL.D., of St. Andrews, for permission, granted in the readiest and most cordial fashion, to make use of certain particulars regarding the chronology of the

¹ In this matter of chronology, be it observed, the poet himself is little better than a blind guide. Whenever he attempts to assign dates to his several compositions, he frequently errs, and not seldom contradicts himself. Nevertheless, in many instances, Wordsworth's testimony is all we at present have to go upon; and, wherever the date he gives is not discredited by evidence from another source, it has been thought best to adopt it in this Edition, as at least provisionally correct.

PREFACE

Sonnets of 1802-3, which he himself had, at considerable pains, hunted up for use in his forthcoming Edition of the Poems. To Professor Dowden the Editor stands indebted for good counsel, assistance, and encouragement during the continuance of his task, as at many other times. Here, too, what has he to offer in return but grateful thanks?—

'Evermore thanks, the exchequer of the poor.'

Lastly, his warmest acknowledgments are due to the Rev. Thomas Hutchinson of Kimbolton, Leominster, the poet's nephew by marriage, who, at considerable inconvenience to himself, in the kindest manner undertook to read a proof of the Chronological Life-Table, marked several errors therein for correction, and suggested certain improvements, which, so far as was found practicable, have been carried into effect.

T. H.

NOTE

I have taken four verbal and six punctual corrections from Mr. Nowell Smith's three-volume edition (London, 1908).

March, 1910.

T. H.

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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

OF THE

LIFE OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

THE following Table is intended to show (1) the chief events of the poet's life, (2) the dates of the publication of his principal works, and (3) his chronological relations to certain of his predecessors and contemporaries.

W. = William Wordsworth, the Poet.
 John, &c. W. = John, &c. Wordsworth.
 H = Hutchinson.
 S. T. C. = Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

A.D.	ÆT.	
1725	—	About this year Richard Wordsworth migrates from Yorkshirc to Westmoreland, is made Superintendent of the Lowther estates, marries, and purchases the property of Sockbridge, in the parish of Barton, near Penrith.
1745	—	Richard W. Receiver-General of the County of Westmoreland.
1754	—	[George Crabbe born.]
1762	—	[Wm. Lisle Bowles born. Joanna Baillie born.]
1763	—	[Samuel Rogers born.]
1764	—	[<i>The Traveller</i> (O. Goldsmith).]
1765	—	[Bp. Percy's <i>Reliques of Ancient English Poetry</i> .]
1766	—	John Wordsworth, attorney, of Cockermouth, chief law-agent to Sir Jas. Lowther, and Steward of the Manor and Forest of Ennerdale (born 1741, second son of Richard W.), marries Anne, daughter of Wm. Cookson, mercer, of Penrith, by Dorothy Crackanthorp, his wife (of the Newbiggin Hall family). To him are born:
1768	—	(1) Richard W. (May 19th; died May 19th, 1816).
1769	—	[<i>The Beggar's Petition</i> (Rev. Thos. Moss).]
1770	—	(2) WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, BORN APRIL 7th. [Mary Hutchinson born Aug. 16th (died Jan. 17th, 1859). James Hogg born. Chatterton died. <i>The Deserted Village</i> (Goldsmith).]
1771	1	(3) Dorothy W. (Dec. 25th; died Jan. 25th, 1855). [Gray died. Scott born. <i>The Minstrel</i> (Beattie).]
1772	2	(4) John W. (Dec. 4th; drowned Feb. 5th, 1805. [S. T. Coleridge born.]
1774	4	(5) Christopher W. (June 9th; died Feb. 2nd, 1846). [Goldsmith died. Southey born. <i>The Country Justice</i> (Langhorne, 1774-5).]
1775	5	[Chas. Lamb born. W. Savage Landor born.]
1777	7	During 1776-7 W. W. and Mary H. attend Anne Birkett's infant school at Penrith. [H. Hallam born. Thos. Campbell born.]
1778	8	Mother dies. W. lodges at Anne Tyson's cottage and attends Hawkshead Grammar-school. [Wm. Hazlitt born.]
1779	9	[Thos. Moore born.]
1781	11	[Ebenezer Elliott born. <i>The Library</i> (Crabbe). <i>Triumphs of Temper</i> (Hayley).]
1782	12	[<i>Poems</i> (Wm. Cowper). <i>Edwin and Elfrida</i> (Helen M. Williams).]
1783	13	John W. (father) dies, leaving his five children in the guardianship of their uncles, Richard Wordsworth and Christ. Crackanthorp. [<i>Poetical Sketches</i> (Blake). <i>The Village</i> (Crabbe).]

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

A.D.	ÆT.	
1784	14	[Dr. Johnson died. Leigh Hunt born. <i>Elegiac Sonnets</i> (Charlotte Smith).]
1785	15	'And has the sun his flaming chariot driven,' &c. written (W.'s earliest extant verses). [De Quincey born. Thos. Love Peacock born. <i>The Newspaper</i> (Crabbe). <i>The Task</i> (Cowper).]
1786	16	'Dear native Regions,' &c.; 'Calm is all Nature,' &c. written. [<i>Poems</i> (Robt. Burns: Kilmarnock Ed.).]
1787	17	Enters at S. John's College, Cambridge. Studies Italian under Agostino Isola. <i>Evening Walk</i> begun. [B. W. Procter born.]
1788	18	Long Vacation ¹ at Hawkshead. First visit to London (autumn). [Byron born. <i>Lewesdon Hill</i> (Wm. Crowe).]
1789	19	Long Vac. with Dorothy W. and Mary H. at Penrith. <i>Evening Walk</i> finished. [<i>The Loves of the Plants</i> (Darwin). <i>Sonnets</i> (W. L. Bowles). <i>Songs of Innocence</i> (Blake).]
1790	20	Walking tour in Long Vac. with Robt. Jones through France and Switzerland. [<i>Julia: a Novel</i> (with <i>Sonnet to Hope</i> : Helen M. Williams).]
1791	21	B.A. Camb. (Jan.). Forncett Rectory, Norfolk; London; Plas-yn-llan, N. Wales (with Robt. Jones); Paris (Nov.); Orleans. <i>Descriptive Sketches</i> begun. <i>Guilt and Sorrow</i> begun.
1792	22	Orleans; Blois (friendship with Michel Beaupuy: in love with Marie Anne Vallon (Annette). Nature now yields the first place to Man in W.'s affections and imagination); Paris (Oct.): W., on the point of offering himself as a leader of the Girondins; his daughter Caroline born (Dec. 15); he is recalled to England; London; <i>Descriptive Sketches</i> finished. [Shelley born. Keble born. <i>Pleasures of Memory</i> (Rogers). <i>The Economy of Vegetation</i> (Darwin).]
1793	23	<i>Evening Walk</i> publ. (Feb.); <i>Descriptive Sketches</i> publ.; London; Isle of Wight, with Wm. Calvert (July); walking tour by Salisbury—Stonehenge—Bath—Bristol—Tintern Abbey—Goodrich Castle—to Plas-yn-llan. Visit to France (Oct.)?; wanderings through N. Wales (autumn). Shocked by England's declaration of war against France (Feb.). Indites a 'Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff, &c. By a Republican'. [Felicia Hemans born. <i>Tam o' Shanter</i> , &c. (Burns).]
1794	24	At Armathwaite near Keswick; joins Dorothy W. at Halifax (Feb.) and with her to Windybrow, the Calverts' cottage, under Skiddaw; Whitcaven; wanderings through Lancashire and the Lake Country. Proposes to start 'The Philanthropist, a monthly Miscellany'; searches in vain for congenial employment; anxious and perplexed. Rampside (Aug.); nursing Raisley Calvert (Oct.—Dec.); <i>Guilt and Sorrow</i> finished. [<i>Fall of Robespierre</i> (S. T. C.). <i>Songs of Experience</i> (Blake). Robespierre executed (July 28th): see <i>Prelude</i> X. 570–603.]
1795	25	At Penrith with Raisley Calvert, who dies (Jan.) leaving W. £900; London; settles with Dorothy W. at Racedown, Dorset (Oct.). Meets S. T. C. at the house of Mr. Pinney, Bristol (prob. late in Sept.). <i>The Borderers</i> begun: writes some Juvenalian satire. <i>Margaret; or, The Ruined Cottage</i> begun. [Keats born. Carlyle born.]
1796	26	Racedown. <i>The Borderers</i> finished. [Burns died. Hartley Coleridge born. <i>Poems</i> , 1st issue (S. T. C.). <i>Joan of Arc</i> (Southey).]
1797	27	Racedown. Intimacy with S. T. C. leads to an outburst of poetic activity. W. and sister visit S. T. C. at Nether Stowey cottage (July 2–16), whence they move to Alfoxden, some three miles distant. Charles Lamb visits S. T. C. (July 9–16). <i>Lyrical Ballads</i> planned with S. T. C.

¹ It was during either this vacation or that of 1794, that W. spent four weeks with his cousin Mrs. Barker in Rampside, a village of Low Furness, Lancashire, right opposite Peel Castle, which lies between Walney Isle and the mainland. Cf. the *Elegiac Stanzas* suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

A.D.	ÆT.	
		<i>Margaret</i> finished (aft. merged in <i>Excursion</i> , Bk. I). W. in London (Dec.). [<i>Poems</i> (S. T. C.; Lamb and Lloyd). <i>Poems</i> (Southey).]
1798	28	Alfoxden (Jan.-June). 1300 lines of blank verse 'on Man, Nature, & Society' written, also several <i>Lyrical Ballads</i> and <i>Peter Bell</i> . [Hazlitt visits S. T. C. and W.] Bristol (July); two short visits to Wales; London (Aug. 27th). <i>Lyrical Ballads</i> publ. (Sept.). Viâ Yarmouth to Hamburg with Dorothy W. and S. T. C. (Sept. 16th); arrives at Goslar (Oct. 6th). ¹ [<i>Epistle to a Friend</i> (Rogers). <i>Plays on the Passions</i> , Vol. I (Joanna Baillie: Vol. II, 1802; Vol. III, 1812). <i>Gebir</i> (W. S. Lander).]
1799	29	Goslar: Göttingen; whence (April 21st) viâ Hamburg to Yarmouth; with Thos. and Mary Hutchinson at Sockburn-on-Tees (May 1st?). Much of <i>Prelude</i> , Bks. I, II, <i>Lucy Gray</i> , and the chief 'Lucy' poems written in Germany. Walking tour through Lake Country with S. T. C. and John W. (Oct.). Settles, with Dorothy W., in Dove Cottage, Townend, Grasmere (Friday, Dec. 20th). Bks. I and II of the <i>Prelude</i> were probably finished before the close of the year. [T. Hood born. <i>Pleasures of Hope</i> (Campbell).]
1800	30	Dove Cottage. John W. sojourns (Jan.-Sept. 29th). S. T. C. visits Grasmere (Apr., May), and, with wife and Hartley, sojourns at Dove Cottage (June 29th-July 24th). Mary H. visits Dove Cottage twice in 1800. S. T. C. settles at Greta Hall, Keswick (Aug.). Frequent intercourse between W. and S. T. C. Poetic activity fully maintained in 1800; <i>The Recluse</i> , Bk. I (publ. 1888); <i>The Brothers, Michael</i> . <i>Poems on naming of Places</i> , and famous <i>Preface</i> written. [Cowper died. Macaulay born.]
1801	31	Dove Cottage. Visits Scotland to be present at Basil Montagu's second marriage (summer). <i>Lyrical Ballads</i> , 2nd ed., two vols. publ. (Jan.). Unproductive interval, Jan.-Dec. 1801. [<i>Thalaba</i> (Southey). <i>John Woodvil</i> (Lamb). <i>Poems</i> ('Thos. Little').]
1802	32	Dove Cottage. Second period of productive energy (Dec. 1801-Dec. 1803: declining somewhat in 1803). Thirty-nine of the poems publ. in 1807 now written; also much of Bks. I and II of <i>The Excursion</i> . The Sonnet now (May 21st onwards) regularly and frequently cultivated. Four weeks' visit to Annette and Caroline at Calais (Aug.). London (Sept.). W. marries Mary H. at Brompton near Scarborough (Oct. 4th); returns to Grasmere (Oct. 6th). <i>Lyrical Ballads</i> , 3rd. ed. [Darwin died.]
1803	33	Dove Cottage. Birth of W.'s son John (June 18th). W. and Dorothy start with S. T. C. on a tour in Scotland (Aug. 16th). They visit Scott at Lasswade, and return to Grasmere (Oct. 14th). Sir Geo. Beaumont buys and presents to W. the little estate of Applethwaite, three miles from Greta Hall. S. T. C. ill at Grasmere (Dec.). <i>Yarrow Unvisited</i> written (Nov.). [<i>Temple of Nature</i> (Darwin).]
1804	34	Dove Cottage. <i>The Prelude</i> continued, Bks. III-VII (Feb.-Apr.); Bks. VIII-XI (Oct.-Dec.). Dora W. born (Aug. 16th). S. T. C. starts for Malta, Apr. 2nd. [<i>Triumphs of Music</i> (Hayley).]
1805	35	Dove Cottage. <i>The Prelude</i> finished, Bks. XII-XIV (Apr., May). Feb. 1804-May 1805 may be regarded as W.'s third period of productive activity. John W. (brother) drowned in the wreck of the <i>Earl of</i>

¹ During this six months' sojourn abroad, W.'s republican ardour evanesced, and with it his resentment towards England as the foe of France. 'We are right glad to find ourselves in England,' he writes on his return to Cottle, 'for we have learned to know its value.' Cf. the lines beginning: 'I travelled among unknown men.'

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

A.D.	ÆT.	
		<i>Abergavenny</i> (Feb. 5th). W. ascends Helvellyn along with Walter Scott and Humphry Davy. <i>The Waggoner</i> written. <i>Lyrical Ballads</i> , 4th ed. [<i>Madoc</i> (Southey). <i>Lay of the Last Minstrel</i> (Scott).]
1806	36	Dove Cottage. Visit to London (April-May). Thomas W. born (June 16th). S. T. C. returns to England (Aug.). W. moves into the farm-house at Coleorton (lent by Sir G. Beaumont) in October. Meets S. T. C. at Kendal (Oct. 26th). S. T. C. at Coleorton (Dec. 1806-Feb. 1807). Fourth period of poetic productiveness (Nov. 1806-Feb. 1808). [<i>Simonidea</i> (Landor). <i>Odes and Epistles</i> (T. Moore).]
1807	37	Coleorton farm-house. <i>Poems in Two Volumes</i> publ. (prob. early in May). W. visits London (April), returning to Coleorton with W. Scott. Home to Grasmere via Halifax and Yorkshire dales (Aug.). De Quincey calls at Dove Cottage (Nov. 4th). <i>Poems in Two Volumes</i> savagely attacked in <i>Edinburgh Review</i> . W. visits John H. (wife's brother) at Stockton-on-Tees, where part of <i>The White Doe of Rylstone</i> is written (Dec.). [<i>Parish Register</i> (Crabbe). <i>Hours of Idleness</i> (Byron).]
1808	38	Dove Cottage. <i>The White Doe</i> (first draft) finished (Feb.). Visit to London (March). Moves from Dove Cottage into Allan Bank (June). Catharine W. born (Sept. 6th). S. T. C. and De Quincey domesticated at Allan Bank (Sept.). [<i>Marmion</i> (Scott). Lord Houghton born.]
1809	39	Allan Bank. <i>The Excursion</i> continued and completed during this and the four following years. Tract on the <i>Convention of Cintra</i> (written Nov., Dec., 1808) publ. (end of May). <i>The Friend</i> publ. by S. T. C. (No. 1 on June 1st) at Penrith. De Quincey settles at Dove Cottage (Nov.). <i>Reply to the Letter of Mathetes</i> (in <i>The Friend</i>) publ. (Dec.). [<i>English Bards and Scotch Reviewers</i> (Byron). <i>Gertrude of Wyoming</i> (Campbell). A. Tennyson, Elizabeth Barrett, W. E. Gladstone, Chas. Darwin born.]
1810	40	Allan Bank. <i>Essay on Epitaphs</i> (in <i>The Friend</i>) publ. (Feb.). <i>Description of the Scenery of the English Lakes</i> , publ. as Intro. to Wilkinson's <i>Select Views</i> (Apr.). William W. born (May 12th). S. T. C. quits Allan Bank for Keswick (May); passes a night there on his way to London with Basil Montagu (Oct.); estrangement between W. and S. T. C. (Oct.). About this time W.'s poetic ill-repute is at its height (De Quincey). [<i>The Borough</i> (Crabbe). <i>Lady of the Lake</i> (Scott). <i>Curse of Kehama</i> (Southey).]
1811	41	Allan Bank. W. moves into the Rectory (May). Sojourns at Bootle (Aug.: see <i>Poetical Epistles to Sir Geo. Beaumont</i>). [Thackeray born. Bp. Percy died. <i>Don Roderick</i> (Scott).]
1812	42	The Rectory. W. seeks through Lord Lonsdale for some office of emolument (Feb.). Visits London and is reconciled to S. T. C. (May). Catharine (June 4th) and Thomas (Dec. 1st) W. died. [Chas. Dickens born. Robert Browning born. <i>Tales in Verse</i> (Crabbe). <i>Count Julian</i> (Landor). <i>Childe Harold</i> , Cantos I, II (Byron). <i>The Isle of Palms</i> (Wilson).]
1813	43	The Rectory. Appointed Stamp-Distributor for Westmorland (March). Moves into Rydal Mount (May 1st). [<i>Rokeby</i> ; <i>The Bridal of Triermain</i> (Scott). <i>Remorse</i> (S. T. C.), performed at Drury Lane (Jan.).]
1814	44	Rydal Mount. Tour in Scotland with wife and Sara H. (July): <i>Yarrow Visited</i> . <i>The Excursion</i> publ. (Aug.). [<i>Roderick</i> (Southey). <i>The Feast of the Poets</i> (Leigh Hunt).]
1815	45	Rydal Mount. <i>The first collective ed. of the poems</i> publ. (March). Visit to London (Apr.). <i>The White Doe of Rylstone</i> publ. (May). [<i>The Lord of the Isles</i> (Scott).]

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

A.D.	ÆT.	
1816	46	Rydal Mount. <i>A Letter to a Friend of Robert Burns</i> publ. <i>Thanksgiving Ode</i> , Jan. 18, 1816, &c., publ. W.'s daughter Caroline married to Jean Baptiste Baudouin (Feb.); W.'s granddaughter Louise Marie Caroline Baudouin born (Dec. 27). [<i>Alastor</i> (Shelley). <i>Christabel</i> , &c. (S. T. C.). <i>The Story of Rimini</i> (Leigh Hunt).]
1817	47	Rydal Mount. W. visits Dr. Christopher W. (brother) at Lambeth Rectory (Dec.). W. and Keats meet at Haydon's 'immortal dinner' (Dec.). W.'s poetry cordially praised in <i>Blackwood</i> . [<i>Sibylline Leaves; Biographia Literaria</i> (S. T. C.). <i>Poems</i> , 1st issue (Keats). <i>Lalla Rookh</i> (Moore). <i>Harold the Dauntless</i> (Scott). <i>The Whistlecraft Poem</i> (J. H. Frere).]
1818	48	Rydal Mount. Correspondence with Lord Lonsdale on public affairs. <i>Two Addresses to the Freeholders of Westmorland</i> , publ. at Kendal. [<i>Childe Harold</i> , Cantos III, IV (Byron). <i>Revolt of Islam</i> (Shelley). <i>Poems</i> (Chas. Lamb, in his collected <i>Works</i>). <i>Foliage</i> (Leigh Hunt). <i>Endymion</i> (Keats). <i>Rhododaphne</i> (T. L. Peacock).]
1819	49	Rydal Mount. J.P. for Westmorland. <i>Peter Bell</i> publ. (Apr.). <i>The Waggoner</i> publ. (May). [<i>Don Juan</i> , Canto I, &c. (Byron). <i>Tales of the Hall</i> (Crabbe). <i>Dramatic Scenes</i> (Procter). <i>Rosalind and Helen—The Cenci</i> (Shelley). Arthur H. Clough born. Chas. Kingsley born.]
1820	50	Rydal Mount. Oxford (May 30th); Lambeth Rectory (June–July). Tour with wife and sister through Switzerland to Italian Lakes and home through Paris (July 11th–Nov. 9th). Fortnight in London; do. at the Lodge, Trinity Coll., Cambr. (where Dr. Christ. W. is now Master); do. at Coleorton Hall. Home at Rydal (Dec. 24th). <i>The River Duddon: a Series of Sonnets</i> , &c., publ. (May). Also, <i>The Miscellaneous Poems of W. W.</i> in four vols. (July), and <i>The Excursion</i> , 2nd ed. [<i>Lamia, Isabella, Hyperion</i> , &c. (Keats). <i>Idyllia Heroica Decem</i> (Landon). <i>Prometheus Unbound</i> (Shelley). <i>Marcian Colonna</i> (Procter).]
1821	51	Rydal Mount. W. busy with the <i>Ecclesiastical Sketches</i> . [Keats died. <i>Adonais; Epipsychidion</i> (Shelley). <i>Cain</i> , &c. (Byron). <i>Mirandola; A Sicilian Story</i> (Procter).]
1822	52	Rydal Mount. <i>Memorials of a Tour on the Continent</i> , 1820, and <i>Ecclesiastical Sketches</i> publ. (Feb. or March). Also, <i>Description of the Scenery of the Lakes</i> , now first publ. separately (publ. as appendix to <i>Duddon</i> vol. in 1820; see also under 1810). [Shelley drowned. <i>Hellas</i> (Shelley).]
1823	53	Rydal Mount. Coleorton Hall (Feb.); London (Mar., Apr.); Lee Priory near Canterbury (May). Tour through the Netherlands (May 16th–June 30th). 'Every year shows more and more how strongly W.'s poetry has leavened the rising generation' (Southey). 'Up to 1820 the name of W. was trampled under foot; from 1820 to 1830 it was militant; from 1830 to 1835 it has been triumphant' (De Quincey, 1835). [<i>The Loves of the Angels</i> (T. Moore).]
1824	54	Rydal Mount. London; Cambridge; Coleorton Hall (Apr., May). Tour in N. Wales, and visits to Robt. Jones, now Curate of Glyn Mavyr, and to Thos. H. at Hindwell, Radnorshire (Aug., Sept., Oct.). [Byron died.]
1825	55	Rydal Mount. Coleorton Hall (July). Lowther Castle (Aug.). Alaric Watts tries in vain to get a London publisher for an ed. of W.'s collected poems.
1826	56	Rydal Mount. <i>The Excursion</i> , and the shorter poems, carefully revised and corrected, and the <i>Miscellaneous Sonnets</i> re-arranged in groups on the principle of mutual illustration, for the projected five-vol. ed.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

A.D.	ÆT.	
1827	57	Rydal Mount. Sir Geo. Beaumont died (Feb.). <i>An ed. in five vols. (the third collective ed.) of the poems</i> publ., including (for the first time) <i>The Excursion</i> . [<i>Poems</i> (T. Hood). <i>The Christian Year</i> (Keble).]
1828	58	Rydal Mount. W., Dora W., and S. T. C. go on a fortnight's tour up the Rhine (June). John W. takes holy orders, and after a year as Curate at Whitwick near Coleorton obtains from Lord Lonsdale the living of Moresby, Cumberland.
1829	59	Rydal Mount. Carriage tour through Ireland with J. Marshall, M.P. for Leeds (Aug., Sept.). Dorothy W. taken seriously ill at Whitwick (Apr.).
1830	60	Rydal Mount. Felicia Hemans (July) and W. Rowan Hamilton (Aug.) visit W. Rev. John W. marries dau. of H. Curwen, Workington Hall, Cumberland (Oct.). W. rides from Lancaster to Cambridge (Nov.); London (Dec.). [Hazlitt died. <i>Poems, chiefly Lyrical</i> (A. Tennyson).]
1831	61	Buxted Rectory, Sussex (the home of Dr. Christ. W.); home at Rydal (June). W., Dora W., and Charles W. (nephew), aft. Bishop of S. Andrews, visit Sir Walter Scott at Abbotsford (Sept. 21st), and travel through the Highlands. <i>Yarrow Revisited</i> . [<i>Corn Law Rhymes</i> (Eb. Elliott).]
1832	62	Rydal Mount. Moresby Rectory (June), where W. is visited by W. Savage Landor. Correspondence on Reform with Lord Lonsdale, Henry Taylor, and H. Crabb Robinson (Sept., Oct.). <i>Edition in four vols. (the fourth collective ed.) of the poems</i> publ. [Sir W. Scott died (Sept. 21st). Rev. Geo. Crabbe died. Dr. Arnold purchases Fox How. <i>English Songs</i> (B. W. Procter).]
1833	63	Rydal Mount. Moresby Rectory (Apr.), where several of the <i>Evening Voluntaries</i> were written. Tour in the Isle of Man and in Scotland with John W. and H. Crabb Robinson (Sept., Oct.). [<i>Pauline</i> (R. Browning). <i>Poems</i> (Hartley Coleridge).]
1834	64	Rydal Mount. [S. T. C. died (July 25th). Chas. Lamb died (Dec. 27th). <i>Italy</i> completed (first draft publ. 1822): Rogers]
1835	65	Rydal Mount. London (Feb., Mar.), Cambridge (Apr.). Sara Hutchinson (sister-in-law) died (June 23rd). Dorothy W.'s mind gives way. W. visits Thos. H. at Brinsop Court, Herefordshire (Aug.-Nov.). <i>Yarrow Revisited and other Poems</i> publ. (prob. Jan.), containing the <i>Itinerary Sonnets</i> of 1831, and those of 1833; <i>Evening Voluntaries</i> ; <i>The Egyptian Maid</i> , &c. [Mrs. Hemans died. Jas. Hogg died. Rev. Robt. Jones died. <i>Prometheus Bound</i> , &c. (Eliz. Barrett).]
1836	66	Rydal Mount. London (May), where W. attends first night of <i>Ion</i> (Talfourd). Back at Rydal in June; and from June-Dec. engaged in revising poems for the projected stereotyped ed. [<i>Pericles and Aspasia</i> (Landor).]
1837	67	Rydal Mount. <i>New ed. in six vols. (the fifth collective ed.) of the poems</i> (Vols. I, II, 1836; Vols. III-VI, 1837). Poems reprinted in the United States, ed. Henry Reed. Tour with H. Crabb Robinson through France and Italy to Rome (March-Aug.). Brinsop Court (Sept.). [<i>Strafford</i> (R. Browning). W. S. Landor, in requital of W.'s fancied depreciation of Southey, parodies <i>We are Seven</i> , and prints the <i>Satire on Satirists, and Admonition to Detractors</i> .]
1838	68	Rydal Mount. D.C.L. Univ. Durham (summer). <i>The Sonnets of W. W. collected in one vol.</i> , publ. (June). Lengthy correspondence with Talfourd, H. C. Robinson, W. E. Gladstone and others on the copyright question. Julius Hare dedicates the 2nd edition of <i>Guesses at Truth</i> to W. [<i>The Seraphim</i> , &c. (Eliz. Barrett).]
1839	69	Rydal Mount. W. petitions the House of Commons in support of Talfourd's Copyright Bill (May). D.C.L. Oxford (July). Presented by Keble, and greeted with acclamation. [<i>Romaunt of the Page</i> (Eliz. Barrett).]

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

A.D.	ÆT.	
1840	70	Rydal Mount. Pickersgill paints a portrait of W. for the Drayton Manor Gallery (summer). Miss Fenwick settles at Rydal Mount (Oct.). [Francis Hare died. <i>Sordello</i> (R. Browning). <i>Fugitive Verses</i> (Joanna Baillie).]
1841	71	Rydal Mount. W. and his family visit Taunton and Brinsop (Apr.). Dora W. married to Edw. Quillinan (May 11th) at Bath. W. revisits old haunts—Alfoxden, Tintern, Goodrich Castle, &c.; then to London (Aug.), and home to Rydal (Sept.). [<i>Bells and Pomegranates</i> (R. Browning), Nos. i-viii. (1841-1846).]
1842	72	Rydal Mount. London (May, June). <i>Poems, Chiefly of Early and Late Years</i> , publ. (Apr.). Resigns the Stamp-Distributorship (July). Pension of £300 per annum from Civil List conferred on W. by Sir Robt. Peel (Oct.). [<i>Poems in two Volumes</i> (A. Tennyson).]
1843	73	Rydal Mount. At home (spring and summer). The Quillinans at Windermere. Accepts the Laureateship (Apr.). [Robt. Southey died (March 21st). <i>Song of the Shirt</i> (T. Hood). <i>Lays of Ancient Rome</i> (Macaulay).]
1844	74	Rydal Mount. Keble dedicates his <i>Prælectiones Academicæ</i> to W. (March). Tour through the Duddon Valley with the Quillinans and Lady Richardson (Sept.). [Thos. Campbell died. <i>Poems</i> , 2 vols. (Eliz. Barrett). <i>The Bridge of Sighs</i> (T. Hood).]
1845	75	Rydal Mount. The Quillinans go to Oporto (spring). W. attends Levée and State Ball in London (May). At Brinsop Court (Sept., Oct.). <i>New ed. of the poems in one vol.</i> , royal 8vo. <i>Kendal and Windermere Railway: Two Letters Reprinted from the Morning Post</i> , publ. at Kendal (Jan.; or, possibly, Dec., 1844). [Thos. Hood died.]
1846	76	Rydal Mount. Elected hon. mem. Royal Irish Academy (March). Nominated for Lord Rectorship of Glasgow Univ., and obtained a majority of twenty-one votes over Lord John Russell, who however was seated by means of the Sub-Rector's vote. The Quillinans return and settle at Loughrigg Holm (July). [<i>Hellenics</i> (W. S. Landor).]
1847	77	Rydal Mount. William W. marries Miss Fanny E. Graham of Brighton (Jan.). Dora Quillinan died (July 9th). <i>The Installation Ode</i> performed in the Senate-House, Cambr. (July). [<i>The Princess</i> (A. Tennyson).]
1848	78	Rydal Mount. H. Crabb Robinson comes down to Rydal, as in 1835 and 1838, for the Christmas season. [<i>The Saint's Tragedy</i> (C. Kingsley). <i>The Bothe of Tober-na-vuolich</i> (A. H. Clough). <i>Casa Guidi Windows</i> (Eliz. Barrett Browning).]
1849	79	Rydal Mount. Hartley Coleridge died, Jan. 6th. W. and wife visit Thos. Hutchinson at West Malvern (June). <i>An ed. of the poems, in six vols.</i> , giving the results of W.'s final revision of the text, publ. 1849-50. [<i>The Strayed Reveller</i> , &c. (M. Arnold). <i>Ambarvalia</i> (A. H. Clough).]
1850	80	WILLIAM WORDSWORTH DIED, April 23rd. Buried in Grasmere Churchyard (April 27th). <i>The Prelude; or, Growth of a Poet's Mind</i> publ. [Rev. W. L. Bowles died.]

The stereotyped edition of the poems in six volumes, published in 1836-7, was re-issued, with a revised and slightly altered text, in 1840; and this edition of 1840 again was also reprinted in 1841, 1842, 1843, 1846, and 1849. To the six-vol. ed. of 1842 the volume, originally published under the title of *Poems, Chiefly of Early and Late Years*, was added in the course of that same year, with the title: *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth. Volume VII.* London: Edward Moxon. 1842.

The one-vol. edition of 1845 has also been frequently reprinted. After 1850 the contents were enlarged by the addition of *The Prelude*, and of the nine poems first published in 1849-50. Moxon's familiar one-vol. edition—that which has a prefatory notice from the pen of Mr. W. M. Rossetti—is in fact but a re-issue of this ed. of 1845, with *The Prelude*, but without the poems of 1849-50.

In 1857 a six-volume edition of the poems appeared, in which the notes dictated in 1843 by the poet to Miss Fenwick were first published, being prefixed to the individual pieces to which they severally refer.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

The *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff*, mentioned under 1793 in the foregoing Table, remained unpublished until 1876, when it was included in the collective edition of *Wordsworth's Prose Works* put forth by Dr. A. B. Grosart.

Besides the prose writings already noticed, Wordsworth wrote (1) the famous *Preface* to the second edition (1800) of the *Lyrical Ballads*; (2) the *Appendix on Poetic Diction* to the third edition (1802); (3) the *Preface to The Excursion*; (4) the *Preface* and the *Essay Supplementary to the Preface* of the edition of 1815; and (5) the *Postscript* to the *Yarrow Revisited* volume.¹ Many notes also from Wordsworth's pen appeared in the several successive issues of his poems between 1793 and 1845; of which notes the poet subsequently saw fit to cancel not a few. One or two of these, which seemed well worth restoring, will be found in this volume amongst the notes of ed. 1849-50, from which they are distinguished by the addition of their proper date after the signature (W.).

T. H.

¹ All of these will be found in the present edition.

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH

Of the Poems in this class, 'THE EVENING WALK' and 'DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES' were first published in 1793. They are reprinted with some alterations that were chiefly made very soon after their publication.

This notice, which was written some time ago, scarcely applies to the Poem, 'Descriptive Sketches,' as it now stands. The corrections, though numerous, are not, however, such as to prevent its retaining with propriety a place in the class of Juvenile Pieces,
1836.

I

EXTRACT

FROM THE CONCLUSION OF A POEM,
COMPOSED IN ANTICIPATION OF
LEAVING SCHOOL

[Composed 1786.—Published 1815.]

DEAR native regions, I foretell,
From what I feel at this farewell,
That, wheresoe'er my steps may tend,
And whensoe'er my course shall end,
If in that hour a single tie
Survive of local sympathy,
My soul will cast the backward view,
The longing look alone on you.

Thus, while the Sun sinks down to rest
Far in the regions of the west,
Though to the vale no parting beam
Be given, not one memorial gleam,
A lingering light he fondly throws
On the dear hills where first he rose.

II

WRITTEN IN VERY EARLY YOUTH

[Composed 1786 (?).—Published *Morning Post*
February 13, 1802; ed. 1807.]

CALM is all nature as a resting wheel.
The kine are couched upon the dewy
grass;

The horse alone, seen dimly as I pass,
Is cropping audibly his later meal:
Dark is the ground; a slumber seems to
steal
O'er vale, and mountain, and the starless
sky.

Now, in this blank of things, a harmony,
Home-felt, and home-created, comes to
heal

That grief for which the senses still supply
Fresh food; for only then, when memory
Is hushed, am I at rest. My Friends!
restrain
Those busy cares that would allay my
pain;

Oh! leave me to myself, nor let me feel
The officious touch that makes me droop
again.

¹ See Appendix: *Poems of 1793*, pp. 462-482.

III

AN EVENING WALK¹

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY

[Composed 1787-89.—Published 1793.]

General Sketch of the Lakes—Author's regret of
his Youth which was passed amongst them—
Short description of Noon—Cascade—Noon-
tide Retreat—Precipice and sloping Lights—
Face of Nature as the Sun declines—Mountain-
farm, and the Cock—Slate-quarry—Sunset—
Superstition of the Country connected with that
moment—Swans—Female Beggar—Twilight-
sounds—Western Lights—Spirits—Night—
Moonlight—Hope—Night-sounds—Conclusion.

FAR from my dearest Friend, 'tis mine to
rove
Through bare grey dell, high wood, and
pastoral cove;
Where Derwent rests, and listens to the
roar
That stuns the tremulous cliffs of high
Lodore;
Where peace to Grasmere's lonely island
leads,
To willow hedge-rows, and to emerald
meads;
Leads to her bridge, rude church, and
cottage grounds,
Her rocky sheepwalks, and her woodland
bounds;
Where, undisturbed by winds, Winander²
sleeps;
'Mid clustering isles, and holly-sprinkled
steeps;
Where twilight glens endear my Esth-
waite's shore,
And memory of departed pleasures,
more.

Fair scenes, erewhile, I taught, a happy
child,
The echoes of your rocks my carols
wild:

¹ So many and so important changes have been
made in this Poem since its first appearance, that it
has been thought well to reprint the original text of
1793. See Appendix, page 462.—Ed.

² These lines are only applicable to the middle part
of that lake.

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH

The spirit sought not then, in cherished
sadness, 15
A cloudy substitute for failing glad-
ness.
In youth's keen eye the livelong day was
bright,
The sun at morning, and the stars at
night,
Alike, when first the bittern's hollow bill
Was heard, or woodcocks' roamed the
moonlight hill. 20

In thoughtless gaiety I coursed the
plain,
And hope itself was all I knew of pain;
For then the inexperienced heart would
beat
At times, while young Content forsook
her seat,
And wild Impatience, pointing upward,
showed, 25
Through passes yet unreached, a brighter
road.
Alas! the idle tale of man is found
Depicted in the dial's moral round;
Hope with reflection blends her social
rays
To gild the total tablet of his days; 30
Yet still, the sport of some malignant
power,
He knows but from its shade the present
hour.

But why, ungrateful, dwell on idle
pain?
To show what pleasures yet to me remain,
Say, will my Friend, with reluctant
ear, 35
The history of a poet's evening hear?

When, in the south, the wan noon,
brooding still,
Breathed a pale steam around the glaring
hill,
And shades of deep-embattled clouds
were seen,
Spotting the northern cliffs with lights
between; 40
When crowding cattle, checked by rails
that make
A fence far stretched into the shallow
lake,
Lashed the cool water with their restless
tails,
Or from high points of rock looked out
for fanning gales;
When school-boys stretched their length
upon the green; 45
And round the broad-spread oak, a glim-
mering scene,

¹ In the beginning of winter these mountains are frequented by woodcocks, which in dark nights retire into the woods.

In the rough fern-clad park, the herded
deer
Shook the still-twinkling tail and glancing
ear;
When horses in the sunburnt intake¹
stood,
And vainly eyed below the tempting
flood, 50
Or tracked the passenger, in mute distress,
With forward neck the closing gate to
press—
Then, while I wandered where the hud-
dling rill
Brightens with water-breaks the hollow
ghyll²
As by enchantment, an obscure retreat
Opened at once, and stayed my devious
feet. 56
While thick above the rill the branches
close,
In rocky basin its wild waves repose,
Inverted shrubs, and moss of gloomy
green,
Cling from the rocks, with pale wood-
weeds between; 60
And its own twilight softens the whole
scene,
Save where aloft the subtle sunbeams
shine
On withered briars that o'er the crags
recline;
Save where, with sparkling foam, a small
cascade
Illumines, from within, the leafy shade;
Beyond, along the vista of the brook, 66
Where antique roots its bustling course
o'erlook,
The eye reposes on a secret bridge,⁴
Half grey, half shagged with ivy to its
ridge;
There, bending o'er the stream, the listless
swain 70
Lingers behind his disappearing wain.
—Did Sabine grace adorn my living line,
Bandusia's praise, wild stream, should
yield to thine!
Never shall ruthless minister of death
Mid thy soft glooms the glittering steel
unheath; 75
No goblets shall, for thee, be crowned
with flowers,
No kid with piteous outcry thrill thy
bowers;
The mystic shapes that by thy margin
rove
A more benignant sacrifice approve—

¹ The word *intake* is local, and signifies a mountain-inclosure.

² Ghyll is also, I believe, a term confined to this country: ghyll and dingle have the same meaning.

⁴ The reader, who has made the tour of this country, will recognise, in this description, the features which characterise the lower waterfall in the grounds of Rydal.

AN EVENING WALK

A mind that, in a calm angelic mood · 80
Of happy wisdom, meditating good,
Beholds, of all from her high powers
required,
Much done, and much designed, and
more desired,—
Harmonious thoughts, a soul by truth
refined,
Entire affection for all human kind. 85

Dear Brook, farewell! To-morrow's
noon again
Shall hide me, wooing long thy wildwood
strain;
But now the sun has gained his western
road,
And eve's mild hour invites my steps
abroad.

While, near the midway cliff, the sil-
vered kite 90
In many a whistling circle wheels her flight;
Slant watery lights, from parting clouds,
apace
Travel along the precipice's base;
Cheering its naked waste of scattered
stone,
By lichens grey, and scanty moss, o'er-
grown; 95
Where scarce the foxglove peeps, or
thistle's beard;
And restless stone-chat, all day long, is
heard.

How pleasant, as the sun declines, to
view
The spacious landscape change in form
and hue!
Here, vanish, as in mist, before a flood 100
Of bright obscurity, hill, lawn, and wood;
There, objects, by the searching beams
betrayed,
Come forth, and here retire in purple
shade;
Even the white stems of birch, the cottage
white,
Soften their glare before the mellow
light; 105
The skiffs, at anchor where with umbrage
wide
Yon chestnuts half the latticed boat-
house hide,
Shed from their sides, that face the sun's
slant beam,
Strong flakes of radiance on the tremu-
lous stream:
Raised by yon travelling flock, a dusty
cloud 110
Mounts from the road, and spreads its
moving shroud;
The shepherd, all involved in wreaths of
fire,
Now shows a shadowy speck, and now is
lost entire.

Into a gradual calm the breezes sink,
A blue rim borders all the lake's still
brink; 115
There doth the twinkling aspen's foliage
sleep,
And insects clothe, like dust, the glassy
deep:
And now, on every side, the surface
breaks
Into blue spots, and slowly lengthening
streaks;
Here, plots of sparkling water tremble
bright 120
With thousand thousand twinkling points
of light;
There, waves that, hardly weltering, die
away,
Tip their smooth ridges with a softer
ray;
And now the whole wide lake in deep
repose
Is hushed, and like a burnished mirror
glows, 125
Save where, along the shady western
marge,
Coasts, with industrious oar, the charcoal
barge.

Their panniered train a group of pot-
ters goad,
Winding from side to side up the steep
road;
The peasant, from yon cliff of fearful edge
Shot, down the headlong path darts with
his sledge; 131
Bright beams the lonely mountain-horse
illumine
Feeding 'mid purple heath, 'green rings',¹
and broom;
While the sharp slope the slackened team
confounds,
Downward the ponderous timber-wain
resounds; 135
In foamy breaks the rill, with merry song,
Dashed o'er the rough rock, lightly leaps
along;
From lonesome chapel at the mountain's
feet
Three humble bells their rustic chime re-
peat;
Sounds from the water-side the ham-
mered boat; 140
And blasted quarry thunders, heard re-
mote!

Even here, amid the sweep of endless
woods,
Blue pomp of lakes, high cliffs and falling
floods,
Not undelightful are the simplest charms,
Found by the grassy door of mountain-
farms. 145

¹ 'Vivid rings of green.'—GREENWOOD's *Poem on Shooting*.

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH

Sweetly ferocious,¹ round his native
walks,
Pride of his sister-wives, the monarch
stalks;
Spur-clad his nervous feet, and firm his
tread;
A crest of purple tops the warrior's head.
Bright sparks his black and rolling eyeball
hurls 150
Afar, his tail he closes and unfurls;
On tiptoe reared, he strains his clarion
throat,
Threatened by faintly-answering farms
remote:
Again with his shrill voice the mountain
rings,
While, flapped with conscious pride, he
resound his wings! 155

Where, mixed with graceful birch, the
sombrous pine
And yew-tree o'er the silver rocks recline,
I love to mark the quarry's moving trains,
Dwarf panniered steeds, and men, and
numerous wains: 159
How busy all the enormous hive within,
While Echo dallies with its various din!
Some (hear you not their chisels' clinking
sound?)
Toil, small as pygmies in the gulf pro-
found;
Some, dim between the lofty cliffs de-
scribed,
O'erwalk the slender plank from side to
side; 165
These, by the pale-blue rocks that cease-
less ring,
In airy baskets hanging, work and sing.

Just where a cloud above the mountain
rears
An edge all flame, the broadening sun
appears;
A long blue bar its ægis orb divides, 170
And breaks the spreading of its golden
tides;
And now that orb has touched the purple
steep,
Whose softened image penetrates the
deep.
'Cross the calm lake's blue shades the
cliffs aspire,
With towers and woods, a 'prospect all
on fire;' 175
While coves and secret hollows, through
a ray
Of fainter gold, a purple gleam betray.
Each slip of lawn the broken rocks
between
Shines in the light with more than earthly
green:

¹ 'Dolcemente feroce.'—TASSO.—In this descrip-
tion of the cock, I remembered a spirited one of the
same animal in L'Agriculture, ou Les Géorgiques
Françoises, of M. Rossuet.

Deep yellow beams the scattered stems
illumine. 180
Far in the level forest's central gloom:
Waving his hat, the shepherd, from the
vale,
Directs his winding dog the cliffs to
scale,—
The dog, loud barking, 'mid the glittering
rocks,
Hunts, where his master points, the inter-
cepted flocks. 185
Where oaks o'erhang the road the radi-
ance shoots
On tawny earth, wild weeds, and twisted
roots;
The druid-stones a brightened ring un-
fold;
And all the babbling brooks are liquid
gold;
Sunk to a curve, the day-star lessens
still, 190
Gives one bright glance, and drops be-
hind the hill.²

In these secluded vales, if village fame,
Confirmed by hoary hairs, belief may
claim;
When up the hills, as now, retired the
light,
Strange apparitions mocked the shep-
herd's sight. 195

The form appears of one that spurs his
steed
Midway along the hill with desperate
speed;
Unhurd pursues his lengthened flight,
while all 198
Attend, at every stretch, his headlong fall.
Anon, appears a brave, a gorgeous show
Of horsemen-shadows moving to and fro;
At intervals imperial banners stream,
And now the van reflects the solar beam;
The rear through iron brown betrays a
sullen gleam.
While silent stands the admiring crowd
below, 205
Silent the visionary warriors go,
Winding in ordered pomp their upward
way,³
Till the last banner of their long array
Has disappeared, and every trace is fled
Of splendour—save the beacon's spiry
head 210
Tipt with eve's latest gleam of burning
red.

Now, while the solemn evening sha-
dows sail,
On slowly-waving pinions, down the vale;

² From Thomson.

³ See a description of an appearance of this kind
in Clark's Survey of the Lakes, accompanied by
vouchers of its veracity, that may amuse the reader.

AN EVENING WALK

And, fronting the bright west, yon oak
 entwines
 its darkening boughs and leaves in
 stronger lines; 215
 'Tis pleasant near the tranquil lake to stray
 Where, winding on along some secret bay,
 The swan uplifts his chest, and backward
 flings
 His neck, a varying arch, between his
 towering wings:
 The eye that marks the gliding creature
 sees 220
 How graceful, pride can be, and how
 majestic, ease.
 While tender cares and mild domestic
 loves
 With furtive watch pursue her as she
 moves,
 The female with a meeker charm suc-
 ceeds,
 And her brown little-ones around her
 leads, 225
 Nibbling the water lilies as they pass,
 Or playing wanton with the floating grass.
 She, in a mother's care, her beauty's pride
 Forgetting, calls the wearied to her side;
 Alternately they mount her back, and
 rest 230
 Close by her mantling wings' embraces
 prest.

Long may they float upon this flood
 serene;
 Theirs be these holms untrodden, still,
 and green,
 Where leafy shades fence off the bluster-
 ing gale,
 And breathes in peace the lily of the
 vale! 235
 Yon isle, which feels not even the milk-
 maid's feet,
 Yet hears her song, 'by distance made
 more sweet,
 Yon isle conceals their home, their hut-
 like bower;
 Green water-rushes overspread the floor;
 Long grass and willows form the woven
 wall, 240
 And swings above the roof the poplar tall.
 Thence issuing often with unwieldy stalk,
 They crush with broad black feet their
 flowery walk;
 Or, from the neighbouring water, hear at
 morn
 The hound, the horse's tread, and mellow
 horn; 245
 Involve their serpent-necks in change-
 ful
 rings,
 Rolled wantonly between their slippery
 wings,
 Or, starting up with noise and rude de-
 light,
 Force half upon the wave their cumbrous
 flight.

Fair Swan! by all a mother's joys
 caressed, 250
 Haply some wretch has eyed, and called
 thee blessed;
 When with her infants, from some shady
 seat
 By the lake's edge, she rose—to face the
 noontide heat;
 Or taught their limbs along the dusty
 road
 A few short steps to totter with their
 load. 255

I see her now, denied to lay her head,
 On cold blue nights, in hut or straw-built
 shed,
 Turn to a silent smile their sleepy cry,
 By pointing to the gliding moon on high.
 —When low-hung clouds each star of
 summer hide, 260
 And fireless are the valleys far and wide,
 Where the brook brawls along the public
 road
 Dark with bat-haunted ashes stretching
 broad,
 Oft has she taught them on her lap to lay
 The shining glow-worm; or, in heedless
 play, 265
 Toss it from hand to hand, disquieted;
 While others, not unseen, are free to shed
 Green unmolested light upon their mossy
 bed.

Oh! when the sleety showers her path
 assail,
 And like a torrent roars the headstrong
 gale; 270
 No more her breath can thaw their fingers
 cold;
 Their frozen arms her neck no more can
 fold,
 Weak roof a cowering form two babes to
 shield,
 And faint the fire a dying heart can yield!
 Press the sad kiss, fond mother! vainly
 fears 275
 Thy flooded cheek to wet them with its
 tears;
 No tears can chill them, and no bosom
 warms,
 Thy breast their death-bed, confined in
 thine arms!

Sweet are the sounds that mingle from
 afar,
 Heard by calm lakes, as peeps the folding
 star, 280
 Where the duck dabbles 'mid the rustling
 sedge,
 And feeding pike starts from the water's
 edge,
 Or the swan stirs the reeds, his neck and
 bill
 Wetting, that drip upon the water still;

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH

And heron, as resounds the trodden
shore,²⁸⁵
Shoots upward, darting his long neck
before.

Now, with religious awe, the farewell
light
Blends with the solemn colouring of
night;

'Mid groves of clouds that crest the
mountain's brow,
And round the west's proud lodge their
shadows throw,²⁹⁰

Like Una shining on her gloomy way,
The half-seen form of Twilight roams
astray;
Shedding, through paly loop-holes mild
and small,

Gleams that upon the lake's still bosom
fall;

Soft o'er the surface creep those lustres
pale²⁹⁵

Tracking the motions of the fitful gale.
With restless interchange at once the
bright

Wins on the shade, the shade upon the
light.

No favoured eye was e'er allowed to gaze
On lovelier spectacle in faery days;³⁰⁰

When gentle Spirits urged a sportive
chase,

Brushing with lucid wands the water's
face:

While music, stealing round the glimmer-
ing deeps,

Charmed the tall circle of the enchanted
steeps.

—The lights are vanished from the watery
plains:³⁰⁵

No wreck of all the pageantry remains.
Unheeded night has overcome the vales:

On the dark earth the wearied vision
fails;

The latest lingerer of the forest train,
The lone black fir, forsakes the faded
plain;³¹⁰

Last evening sight, the cottage smoke, no
more,

Lost in the thickened darkness, glimmers
hoar;

And, towering from the sullen dark-
brown mere,

Like a black wall, the mountain-steeps
appear.

—Now o'er the soothed accordant heart
we feel³¹⁵

A sympathetic twilight slowly steal,
And ever, as we fondly muse, we find

The soft gloom deepening on the tranquil
mind.

Stay! pensive, sadly-pleasing visions,
stay!

Ah no! as fades the vale, they fade
away:³²⁰

Yet still the tender, vacant gloom re-
mains;
Still the cold cheek its shuddering tear
retains.

The bird, who ceased, with fading light,
to thread

Silent the hedge or steamy rivulet's bed,
From his grey re-appearing tower shall
soon³²⁵

Salute with gladsome note the rising moon,
While with a hoary light she frosts the
ground,

And pours a deeper blue to Æther's
bound;

Pleased, as she moves, her pomp of clouds
to fold

In robes of azure, fleecy-white, and gold.

Above yon eastern hill, where darkness
broods³³¹

O'er all its vanished dells, and lawns, and
woods;

Where but a mass of shade the sight can
trace,

Even now she shows, half-veiled, her
lovely face:

Across the gloomy valley flings her
light,³³⁵

Far to the western slopes with hamlets
white;

And gives, where woods the chequered
upland strew,

To the green corn of summer, autumn's
hue.

Thus Hope, first pouring from her
blessed horn

Her dawn, far lovelier than the moon's
own morn,³⁴⁰

Till higher mounted, strives in vain to
cheer

The weary hills, impervious, blackening
near;

Yet does she still, undaunted, throw the
while

On darling spots remote her tempting
smile.

Even now she decks for me a distant
scene,³⁴⁵

(For dark and broad the gulf of time be-
tween)

Gilding that cottage with her fondest ray,
(Sole bourn, sole wish, sole object of my
way;

How fair its lawns and sheltering woods
appear!

How sweet its streamlet murmurs in
mine ear!)³⁵⁰

Where we, my Friend, to happy days
shall rise,

Till our small share of hardly-paining
sighs

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES, ETC.

(For sighs will ever trouble human breath)
Creep hushed into the tranquil breast of death.

But now the clear bright Moon her zenith gains,
And, rimy without speck, extend the plains:
The deepest cleft the mountain's front displays

Scarce hides a shadow from her searching rays;

From the dark-blue faint silvery threads divide

The hills, while gleams below the azure tide;

Time softly treads; throughout the landscape breathes

A peace enlivened, not disturbed, by wreaths

Of charcoal-smoke, that, o'er the fallen wood,

Steal down the hill, and spread along the flood.

The song of mountain-streams, unheard by day,

Now hardly heard, beguiles my homeward way.

Air listens, like the sleeping water, still,
To catch the spiritual music of the hill,

Broke only by the slow clock tolling deep,
Or shout that wakes the ferry-man from sleep,

The echoed hoof nearing the distant shore,

The boat's first motion—made with dashing oar;

Sound of closed gate, across the water borne,

Hurrying the timid hare through rustling corn;

The sportive outcry of the mocking owl;
And at long intervals the mill-dog's howl;

The distant forge's swinging thump profound;

Or yell, in the deep woods, of lonely hound.

IV

LINES

WRITTEN WHILE SAILING IN A BOAT
AT EAVING

[Composed 1789.—Published 1798.]

How richly glows the water's breast
Before us, tinged with evening hues,
While, facing thus the crimson west,
The boat her silent course pursues!
And see how dark the backward stream!
A little moment past so smiling!
And still, perhaps, with faithless gleam,
Some other loiterers beguiling.

Such views the youthful Bard allure;
But, heedless of the following gloom,
He deems their colours shall endure
Till peace go with him to the tomb.
—And let him nurse his fond deceit,
And what if he must die in sorrow!
Who would not cherish dreams so sweet,
Though grief and pain may come to-morrow?

V

REMEMBRANCE OF COLLINS

COMPOSED UPON THE THAMES NEAR
RICHMOND

[Composed 1789.—Published 1798.]

GLIDE gently, thus for ever glide,
O Thames! that other bards may see
As lovely visions by thy side
As now, fair river! come to me.
O glide, fair stream! for ever so,
Thy quiet soul on all bestowing,
Till all our minds for ever flow
As thy deep waters now are flowing.

Vain thought!—Yet be as now thou art,
That in thy waters may be seen
The image of a poet's heart,
How bright, how solemn, how serene!
Such as did once the Poet bless,
Who, murmuring here a later ditty,
Could find no refuge from distress
But in the milder grief of pity.

Now let us, as we float along,
For him suspend the dashing oar;
And pray that never child of song
May know that Poet's sorrows more.
How calm! how still! the only sound,
The dripping of the oar suspended!
—The evening darkness gathers round
By virtue's holiest Powers attended.

VI

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES*

TAKEN DURING A PEDESTRIAN TOUR AMONG
THE ALPS

[Composed 1791–92.—Published 1793.]

TO

THE REV. ROBERT JONES,
FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE,
CAMBRIDGE.

DEAR SIR,

However desirous I might have been of giving you proofs of the high place you hold in my

* Collins' Ode on the death of Thomson, the last written, I believe, of the poems which were published during his life-time. This Ode is also alluded to in the next stanza.

† The original (1793) text of this Poem will be found in the Appendix, pp. 469–482. It differs in many important particulars from the finally revised text here given.—Ed.

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH

esteem, I should have been cautious of wounding your delicacy by thus publicly addressing you, had not the circumstance of our having been companions among the Alps seemed to give this dedication a propriety sufficient to do away any scruples which your modesty might otherwise have suggested.

In inscribing this little work to you I consult my heart. You know well how great is the difference between two companions lolling in a post-chaise and two travellers plodding slowly along the road, side by side, each with his little knapsack of necessities upon his shoulders. How much more of heart between the two latter!

I am happy in being conscious that I shall have one reader who will approach the conclusion of these few pages with regret. You they must certainly interest, in reminding you of moments to which you can hardly look back without a pleasure not the less dear from a shade of melancholy. You will meet with few images without recollecting the spot where we observed them together; consequently, whatever is feeble in my design, or spiritless in my colouring, will be amply supplied by your own memory.

With still greater propriety I might have inscribed to you a description of some of the features of your native mountains, through which we have wandered together, in the same manner, with so much pleasure. But the sea-sunsets, which give such splendour to the vale of Clwyd, Snowdon, the chair of Idris, the quiet village of Bethgelert, Menai and her Druids, the Alpine steeps of the Conway, and the still more interesting windings of the wizard stream of the Dee, remain yet untouched. Apprehensive that my pencil may never be exercised on these subjects, I cannot let slip this opportunity of thus publicly assuring you with how much affection and esteem,

I am, dear Sir,

Most sincerely yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

London, 1793.

Happiness (if she had been to be found on earth) among the charms of Nature—Pleasures of the pedestrian Traveller—Author crosses France to the Alps—Present state of the Grande Chartreuse—Lake of Como—Time, Sunset—Same Scene, Twilight—Same Scene, Morning: its voluptuous Character; Old man and forest-cottage music—River Tusa—Via Mala and Grison Gipsy—Skellenen-thal—Lake of Uri—Stormy sunset—Chapel of William Tell—Force of local emotion—Chamois-chaser—View of the higher Alps—Manner of life of a Swiss mountaineer, interspersed with views of the higher Alps—Golden age of the Alps—Life and views continued—Ranz des Vaches, famous Swiss Air—Abbey of Einsiedlen and its pilgrims—Valley of Chamouny—Mont Blanc—Slavery of Savoy—Influence of liberty on cottage-happiness—France—Wish for the Extirpation of slavery—Conclusion.

WERE there, below, a spot of holy ground
Where from distress a refuge might be
found,

And solitude prepare the soul for heaven;
Sure, nature's God that spot to man had
given

Where falls the purple morning far and
wide

In flakes of light upon the mountain-side;

Where with loud voice the power of water
shakes

The leafy wood, or sleeps in quiet lakes.

Yet not unrecompensed the man shall
roam,

Who at the call of summer quits his
home,

And plods through some wide realm o'er
vale and height,

Though seeking only holiday delight;

At least, not owing to himself an aim

To which the sage would give a prouder
name.

No gains too cheaply earned his fancy
cloy,

Though every passing zephyr whispers
joy;

Brisk toil, alternating with ready ease,

Feeds the clear current of his sympathies.

For him sod-seats the cottage-door adorn;

And peeps the far-off spire, his evening
bourn!

Dear is the forest frowning o'er his head,
And dear the velvet green-sward to his
tread:

Moves there a cloud o'er mid-day's flam-
ing eye?

Upward he looks—'and calls it luxury':

Kind Nature's charities his steps attend;

In every babbling brook he finds a friend;

While chastening thoughts of sweetest
use, bestowed

By wisdom, moralise his pensive road.

Host of his welcome inn, the noon-tide
bower,

To his spare meal he calls the passing
poor;

He views the sun uplift his golden fire,
Or sink, with heart alive like Memnon's
lyre;¹

Blesses the moon that comes with kindly
ray,

To light him shaken by his rugged way.

Back from his sight no bashful children
steal;

He sits a brother at the cottage-meal;

His humble looks no shy restraint impart;

Around him plays at will the virgin heart.

While unsuspended wheels the village
dance,

The maidens eye him with enquiring
glance,

Much wondering by what fit of crazing
care,

Or desperate love, bewildered, he came
there.

A hope, that prudence could not then
approve,

That clung to Nature with a truant's love,

¹ The lyre of Memnon is reported to have emitted melancholy or cheerful tones, as it was touched by the sun's evening or morning rays.

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES, ETC.

O'er Gallia's wastes of corn my footsteps
led;
Her files of road-elms, high above my
head
In long-drawn vista, rustling in the
breeze;
Or where her pathways straggle as they
please
By lonely farms and secret villages.
But lo! the Alps, ascending white in air, 50
Toy with the sun and glitter from afar.

And now, emerging from the forest's
gloom,
I greet thee, Chartreuse, while I mourn
thy doom.
Whither is fled that Power whose frown
severe
Awed sober Reason till she crouched in
fear?
That Silence, once in deathlike fetters
bound,
Chains that were loosened only by the
sound
Of holy rites chanted in measured round?
—The voice of blasphemy the fane
alarms,
The cloister startles at the gleam of
arms.
The thundering tube the aged angler
hears,
Bent o'er the groaning flood that sweeps
away his tears.
Cloud-piercing pine-trees nod their
troubled heads,
Spires, rocks, and lawns a browner night
o'erspreads;
Strong terror checks the female peasant's
sighs,
And start the astonished shades at female
eyes.
From Bruno's forest screams the af-
frighted jay,
And slow the insulted eagle wheels away.
A viewless flight of laughing Demons
mock
The Cross, by angels planted¹ on the
aerial rock.
The 'parting Genius' sighs with hollow
breath
Along the mystic streams of Life and
Death.²
Swelling the outcry dull, that long re-
sounds
Portentous through her old woods' track-
less bounds,
Vallombre,³ 'mid her falling fanes, de-
plores,
For ever broke, the sabbath of her
bowers.

¹ Alluding to crosses seen on the tops of the spiry
rocks of Chartreuse, which have every appearance
of being inaccessible.

² Names of rivers at the Chartreuse.

³ Name of one of the valleys of the Chartreuse.

More pleased, my foot the hidden mar-
gin roves
Of Como, bosomed deep in chestnut
groves.
No meadows thrown between, the giddy
steeps
Tower, bare or sylvan, from the narrow
deeps.
—To towns, whose shades of no rude
noise complain,
From ringing team apart and grating
wain—
To flat-roofed towns, that touch the
water's bound,
Or lurk in woody sunless glens pro-
found,
Or, from the bending rocks, obtusive
cling,
And o'er the whitened wave their shadows
fling—
The pathway leads, as round the steeps
it twines;
And Silence loves its purple roof of vines.
The loitering traveller hence, at evening,
sees
From rock-hewn steps the sail between
the trees;
Or marks, 'mid opening cliffs, fair dark-
eyed maids
Tend the small harvest of their garden
glades;
Or stops the solemn mountain-shades to
view
Stretch o'er the pictured mirror broad
and blue,
And track the yellow lights from steep
to steep,
As up the opposing hills they slowly
creep.
Aloft, here, half a village shines, arrayed
In golden light; half hides itself in shade:
While, from amid the darkened roofs,
the spire,
Restlessly flashing, seems to mount like
fire:
There, all unshaded, blazing forests throw
Rich golden verdure on the lake below.
Slow glides the sail along the illumined
shore,
And steals into the shade the lazy oar;
Soft bosoms breathe around contagious
sighs,
And amorous music on the water dies.

How blest, delicious scene! the eye that
greet
Thy open beauties, or thy lone retreats;
Beholds the unwearied sweep of wood
that scales
Thy cliffs; the endless waters of thy
vales;
Thy lowly cots that sprinkle all the shore,
Each with its household boat beside the
door;

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH

Thy torrents shooting from the clear-blue sky;
 Thy towns that cleave, like swallows' nests, on high;
 That glimmer hoar in eve's last light, descried¹¹⁵
 Dim from the twilight water's shaggy side,
 Whence lutes and voices down the enchanted woods
 Steal, and compose the oar-forgotten floods;
 —Thy lake that, streaked or dappled, blue or grey,
 'Mid smoking woods gleams hid from morning's ray¹²⁰
 Slow-travelling down the western hills, to enfold
 Its green-tinged margin in a blaze of gold;
 Thy glittering steeples, whence the matin bell
 Calls forth the woodman from his desert cell,
 And quickens the blithe sound of oars that pass¹²⁵
 Along the steaming lake, to early mass.
 But now farewell to each and all—adieu
 To every charm, and last and chief to you,
 Ye lovely maidens that in noontide shade
 Rest near your little plots of wheaten glade;¹³⁰
 To all that binds the soul in powerless trance,
 Lip-dewy song, and ringlet-tossing dance;
 Where sparkling eyes and breaking smiles illumine
 The sylvan cabin's lute-enlivened gloom.
 —Alas! the very murmur of the streams
 Breathes o'er the failing soul voluptuous dreams,¹³⁶
 While Slavery, forcing the sunk mind to dwell
 On joys that might disgrace the captive's cell,
 Her shameless timbrel shakes on Como's marge,
 And lures from bay to bay the vocal barge.¹⁴⁰
 Yet are thy softer arts with power induced
 To soothe and cheer the poor man's solitude.
 By silent cottage-doors, the peasant's home
 Left vacant for the day, I loved to roam.
 But once I pierced the mazes of a wood
 In which a cabin undeserted stood;¹⁴⁶
 There an old man an olden measure scanned
 On a rude viol touched with withered hand.

As lambs or fawns in April clustering lie
 Under a hoary oak's thin canopy,¹⁵⁰
 Stretched at his feet, with steadfast upward eye,
 His children's children listened to the sound;
 —A Hermit with his family around!

But let us hence; for fair Locarno smiles
 Embowered in walnut slopes and citron isles;¹⁵⁵
 Or seek at eve the banks of Tusa's stream,
 Where, 'mid dim towers and woods, her¹ waters gleam.
 From the bright wave, in solemn gloom, retire
 The dull-red steeples, and, darkening still, aspire
 To where afar rich orange lustres glow
 Round undistinguished clouds, and rocks, and snow:¹⁶¹
 Or, led where Via Mala's chasms confine
 The indignant waters of the infant Rhine,
 Hang o'er the abyss, whose else imper-
 vious gloom
 His burning eyes with fearful light il-
 lume.¹⁶⁵

The mind condemned, without re-
 priev, to go
 O'er life's long deserts with its charge of woe,
 With sad congratulation joins the train
 Where beasts and men together o'er the plain
 Move on—a mighty caravan of pain:¹⁷⁰
 Hope, strength, and courage, social suffer-
 ing brings,
 Freshening the wilderness with shades
 and springs.
 —There be whose lot far otherwise is
 cast:
 Sole human tenant of the piny waste,
 By choice or doom a gipsy wanders
 here,¹⁷⁵
 A nursing babe her only comforter;
 Lo, where she sits beneath yon shaggy
 rock,
 A cowering shape half hid in curling
 smoke!

When lightning among clouds and
 mountain-snows
 Predominates, and darkness comes and
 goes,¹⁸⁰
 And the fierce torrent at the flashes
 broad
 Starts, like a horse, beside the glaring
 road—

¹ The river along whose banks you descend in crossing the Alps by the Simplon Pass.

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES, ETC.

She seeks a covert from the battering
shower
In the roofed bridge;¹ the bridge, in that
dread hour,
Itself all trembling at the torrent's power.

Nor is she more at ease on some *still*
night,¹⁸⁶
When not a star supplies the comfort of
its light;

Only the waning moon hangs dull and red
Above a melancholy mountain's head,
Then sets. In total gloom the Vagrant
sighs,¹⁹⁰

Stoops her sick head, and shuts her weary
eyes;

Or on her fingers counts the distant clock,
Or to the drowsy crow of midnight cock
Listens, or quakes while from the forest's
gulf

Howls near and nearer yet the famished
wolf.¹⁹⁵

From the green vale of Urseren smooth
and wide

Descend we now, the maddened Reuss
our guide;

By rocks that, shutting out the blessed
day,

Cling tremblingly to rocks as loose as
they;

By cells² upon whose image, while he
prays,²⁰⁰

The kneeling peasant scarcely dares to
gaze;

By many a votive death-cross³ planted
near,

And watered duly with the pious tear,
That faded silent from the upward eye

Unmoved with each rude form of peril
nigh;²⁰⁵

Fixed on the anchor left by Him who
saves

Alike in whelming snows and roaring
waves.

But soon a peopled region on the sight
Opens—a little world of calm delight;

Where mists, suspended on the expiring
gale,²¹⁰

Spread rooflike o'er the deep secluded
vale,

And beams of evening, slipping in be-
tween,

Gently illuminate a sober scene:—

¹ Most of the bridges among the Alps are of wood, and covered: these bridges have a heavy appearance, and rather injure the effect of the scenery in some places.

² The Catholic religion prevails here: these cells are, as is well known, very common in the Catholic countries, planted, like the Roman tombs, along the road side.

³ Crosses, commemorative of the deaths of travellers, by the fall of snow and other accidents, are very common along this dreadful road.

Here, on the brown wood-cottages⁴ they
sleep,²¹⁴

There, over rock or sloping pasture creep.
On as we journey, in clear view displayed,
The still vale lengthens underneath its shade
Of low-hung vapour: on the freshened
mead

The green light sparkles;—the dim bowers
recede.

While pastoral pipes and streams the
landscape lull,²²⁰

And bells of passing mules that tinkle dull,
In solemn shapes before the admiring eye

Dilated hang the misty pines on high,
Huge convent domes with pinnacles and
towers,

And antique castles seen through gleamy
showers.²²⁵

From such romantic dreams, my soul,
awake

To sterner pleasure, where, by Uri's lake,
In Nature's pristine majesty outspread,

Winds neither road nor path for foot to
tread:

The rocks rise naked as a wall, or stretch
Far o'er the water, hung with groves of
beech;²³¹

Aerial pines from loftier steeps ascend,
Nor stop but where creation seems to end.

Yet here and there, if 'mid the savage
scene²³⁴

Appears a scanty plot of smiling green,
Up from the lake a zigzag path will creep

To reach a small wood-hut hung boldly
on the steep.

—Before those thresholds (never can they
know

The face of traveller passing to and fro,
No peasant leans upon his pole, to tell ²⁴⁰

For whom at morning tolled the funeral
bell;

Their watch-dog ne'er his angry bark for-
goes,

Touched by the beggar's moan of human
woes;

The shady porch ne'er offered a cool seat
To pilgrims overcome by summer's heat.

Yet thither the world's business finds its
way²⁴⁶

At times, and tales unsought beguile the day,
And *there* are those fond thoughts which

Solitude,
However stern, is powerless to exclude.

There doth the maiden watch her lover's
sail²⁵⁰

Approaching, and upbraid the tardy gale;
At midnight listens till his parting oar,

And its last echo, can be heard no more.

And what if ospreys, cormorants,
herons cry,²⁵⁴

Amid tempestuous vapours driving by,

⁴ The houses in the more retired Swiss valleys are
all built of wood.

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH

Or hovering over wastes too bleak to rear
That common growth of earth, the food-
ful ear;

Where the green apple shrivels on the
spray,

And pines the unripened pear in sum-
mer's kindest ray;

Contentment shares the desolate domain
With Independence, child of high Dis-
dain.

Exulting 'mid the winter of the skies,
Shy as the jealous chamois, Freedom flies,
And grasps by fits her sword, and often
eyes;

And sometimes, as from rock to rock she
bounds,

The Patriot nymph starts at imagined
sounds,

And, wildly pausing, oft she hangs aghast,
Whether some old Swiss air hath checked
her haste,

Or thrill of Spartan life is caught between
the blast.

Sworn with incessant rains from hour
to hour,

All day the floods a deepening murmur
pour:

The sky is veiled, and every cheerful
sight:

Dark is the region as with coming night;
But what a sudden burst of overpowering
light!

Triumphant on the bosom of the storm,
Glances the wheeling eagle's glorious
form!

Eastward, in long perspective glittering,
shine

The wood-crowned cliffs that o'er the lake
recline;

Those lofty cliffs a hundred streams un-
fold,

At once to pillars turned that flame with
gold:

Behind his sail the peasant shrinks, to
shun

The west, that burns like one dilated sun,
A crucible of mighty compass, felt
By mountains, glowing till they seem to
melt.

But, lo! the boatman, overawed, before
The pictured fane of Tell suspends his
oar;

Confused the Marathonian tale appears,
While his eyes sparkle with heroic tears.
And who, that walks where men of an-
cient days

Have wrought with godlike arm the deeds
of praise,

Feels not the spirit of the place control,
Or rouse and agitate his labouring soul?
Say, who, by thinking on Canadian hills,
Or wild Aosta lulled by Alpine rills,

On Zutphen's plain, or on that highland
dell,

Through which rough Garry cleaves his
way, can tell

What high resolves exalt the tenderest
thought

Of him whom passion rivets to the spot,
Where breathed the gale that caught
Wolfe's happiest sigh,

And the last sunbeam fell on Bayard's
eye;

Where bleeding Sidney from the cup re-
tired,

And glad Dundee in 'faint huzzas' ex-
pired?

But now with other mind I stand alone
Upon the summit of this naked cone,

And watch the fearless chamois-hunter
chase

His prey, through tracts abrupt of deso-
late space,

Through vacant worlds where Nature
never gave

A brook to murmur or a bough to wave,
Which unsubstantial Phantoms sacred
keep;

Thro' worlds where Life, and Voice, and
Motion sleep;

Where silent Hours their death-like sway
extend,

Save when the avalanche breaks loose, to
rend

Its way with uproar, till the ruin, drowned
In some dense wood or gulf of snow pro-
found,

Mocks the dull ear of Time with deaf
abortive sound.

—'Tis his, while wandering on from
height to height,

To see a planet's pomp and steady light
In the least star of scarce-appearing night;

While the pale moon moves near him, on
the bound,

Of ether, shining with diminished round,
And far and wide the icy summits blaze,

Rejoicing in the glory of her rays:
To him the day-star glitters small and
bright,

Shorn of its beams, insufferably white,
And he can look beyond the sun, and
view

Those fast-receding depths of sable blue
Flying till vision can no more pursue!

—At once bewildering mists around him
close,

And cold and hunger are his least of
woes;

The Demon of the snow, with angry roar
Descending, shuts for aye his prison door.

¹ For most of the images in the next sixteen verses, I am indebted to M. Raymond's interesting observations, annexed to his translation of Coxe's *Tour in Switzerland*.

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES, ETC.

Soon with despair's whole weight his
spirits sink;
Bread has he none, the snow must be his
drink;
And, ere his eyes can close upon the day,
The eagle of the Alps o'er-shades her prey.

Now couch thyself where, heard with
fear afar, 336
Thunders through echoing pines the head-
long Aar;
Or rather stay to taste the mild delights
Of pensive Underwalden's¹ pastoral
heights.
—Is there who 'mid these awful wilds
has seen 340
The native Genii walk the mountain
green?
Or heard, while other worlds their charms
reveal,
Soft music o'er the aerial summit steal?
While o'er the desert, answering every
close,
Rich steam of sweetest perfume comes and
goes. 345
—And sure there is a secret Power that
reigns
Here, where no trace of man the spot
profanes,
Nought but the *chalets*,² flat and bare, on
high
Suspended 'mid the quiet of the sky;
Or distant herds that pasturing upward
creep, 350
And, not untended, climb the dangerous
steep.
How still! no irreligious sound or sight
Rouses the soul from her severe delight.
An idle voice the sabbath region fills
Of Deep that calls to Deep across the
hills, 355
And with that voice accords the soothing
sound
Of drowsy bells, for ever tinkling round;
Faint wail of eagle melting into blue
Beneath the cliffs, and pine-wood's steady
sugh,³
The solitary heifer's deepened low; 360
Or rumbling, heard remote, of falling
snow.
All motions, sounds, and voices, far and
nigh,
Blend in a music of tranquillity;
Save when, a stranger seen below, the boy
Shouts from the echoing hills with savage
joy. 365

¹ The people of this Canton are supposed to be of a more melancholy disposition than the other inhabitants of the Alps; this, if true, may proceed from their living more secluded.

² This picture is from the middle region of the Alps. *Chalets* are summer huts for the Swiss herdsmen.

³ *Sugh*, a Scotch word expressive of the sound of the wind through the trees.

When, from the sunny breast of open
seas,
And bays with myrtle fringed, the
southern breeze
Comes on to gladden April with the sight
Of green isles widening on each snow-
clad height;
When shouts and lowing herds the valley
fill, 370
And louder torrents stun the noon-tide
hill,
The pastoral Swiss begin the cliffs to
scale,
Leaving to silence the deserted vale;
And, like the Patriarchs in their simple
age,
Move, as the verdure leads, from stage
to stage; 375
High and more high in summer's heat
they go,
And hear the rattling thunder far below:
Or steal beneath the mountains, half-
deterred,
Where huge rocks tremble to the bellow-
ing herd.

One I behold who, 'cross the foaming
flood, 380
Leaps with a bound of graceful hardi-
hood;
Another high on that green ledge;—he
gained
The tempting spot with every sinew
strained;
And downward thence a knot of grass
he throws,
Food for his beasts in time of winter
snows. 385
—Far different life from what Tradition
hoar
Transmits of happier lot in times of
yore!
Then Summer lingered long; and honey
flowed
From out the rocks, the wild bees' safe
abode:
Continual waters welling cheered the
waste, 390
And plants were wholesome, now of
deadly taste:
Nor Winter yet his frozen stores had
piled,
Usurping where the fairest herbage
smiled:
Nor Hunger driven the herds from pas-
tures bare, 395
To climb the treacherous cliffs for scanty
fare.
Then the milk-thistle flourished through
the land,
And forced the full-swoln udder to de-
mand,
Thrice every day, the pail and welcome
hand.

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH

Thus does the father to his children tell
Of banished bliss, by fancy loved too
well. 400

Alas! that human guilt provoked the rod
Of angry Nature to avenge her God.
Still, Nature, ever just, to him imparts
Joys only given to uncorrupted hearts.

'Tis morn: with gold the verdant moun-
tain glows; 405
More high, the snowy peaks with hues
of rose.

Far stretched beneath the many-tinted
hills,

A mighty waste of mist the valley fills,
A solemn sea! whose billows wide around
Stand motionless, to awful silence
bound: 410

Pines, on the coast, through mist their
tops uprear,

That like to leaning masts of stranded
ships appear.

A single chasm, a gulf of gloomy blue,
Gapes in the centre of the sea—and,
through

That dark mysterious gulf ascending,
sound 415

Innumerable streams with roar pro-
found.

Mount through the nearer vapours notes
of birds,

And merry flageolet; the low of herds,
The bark of dogs, the heifer's tinkling
bell,

Talk, laughter, and perchance a church-
tower knell: 420

Think not the peasant from aloft has
gazed

And heard with heart unmoved, with soul
unraised;

Nor is his spirit less enrapt, nor less
Alive to independent happiness,

Then, when he lies, out-stretched, at
even-tide 425

Upon the fragrant mountain's purple
side:

For as the pleasures of his simple day
Beyond his native valley seldom stray,
Nought round its darling precincts can
he find

But brings some past enjoyment to his
mind; 430

While Hope, reclining upon Pleasure's
urn,

Binds her wild wreaths, and whispers his
return.

Once, Man entirely free, alone and
wild,

Was blest as free—for he was Nature's
child.

He, all superior but his God disdained,
Walked none restraining, and by none
restrained: 436

Confessed no law but what his reason
taught,

Did all he wished, and wished but what
he ought.

As man in his primeval dower arrayed
The image of his glorious Sire dis-
played, 440

Even so, by faithful Nature guarded,
here

The traces of primeval Man appear;
The simple dignity no forms debase;

The eye sublime, and surly lion-grace:
The slave of none, of beasts alone the
lord, 445

His book he prizes, nor neglects his
sword;

—Well taught by that to feel his rights,
prepared

With this 'the blessings he enjoys to
guard.'

And as his native hills encircle ground
For many a marvellous victory re-
nowned, 450

The work of Freedom daring to oppose,
With few in arms,¹ innumerable foes,

When to those famous fields his steps are
led,

An unknown power connects him with
the dead:

For images of other worlds are there; 455
Awful the light, and holy is the air.

Fitfully, and in flashes, through his soul,
Like sun-lit tempests, troubled transports
roll;

His bosom heaves, his Spirit towers
again,

Beyond the senses and their little
reign. 460

And oft, when that dread vision hath
past by,

He holds with God himself communion
high,

There where the peal of swelling torrents
fills

The sky-roofed temple of the eternal hills;
Or, when upon the mountain's silent
brow 465

Reclined, he sees, above him and below,
Bright stars of ice and azure fields of
snow;

While needle peaks of granite shooting
bare

Tremble in ever-varying tints of air.

¹ Alluding to several battles which the Swiss in very
small numbers have gained over their oppressors, the
House of Austria; and, in particular, to one fought at
Neffels near Glarus, where three hundred and thirty
men are said to have defeated an army of between
fifteen and twenty thousand Austrians. Scattered
over the valley are to be found eleven stones, with
this inscription, 1388, the year the battle was fought,
marking out, as I was told upon the spot, the several
places where the Austrians, attempting to make a
stand, were repulsed anew.

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES, ETC.

And when a gathering weight of shadows
brown⁴⁷⁰
Falls on the valleys as the sun goes down;
And Pikes, of darkness named and fear
and storms,¹
Uplift in quiet their illumined forms,
In sea-like reach of prospect round him
spread,
Tinged like an angel's smile all rosy
red—⁴⁷⁵
Awe in his breast with holiest love unites,
And the near heavens impart their own
delights.

When downward to his winter hut he
goes,
Dear and more dear the lessening circle
grows;
That hut which on the hills so oft em-
ploys⁴⁸⁰
His thoughts, the central point of all his
joys.
And as a swallow, at the hour of rest,
Peeps often ere she darts into her nest,
So to the homestead, where the grandsire
tends
A little prattling child, he oft descends,
To glance a look upon the well-matched
pair;⁴⁸⁶
Till storm and driving ice blockade him
there.
There, safely guarded by the woods be-
hind,
He hears the chiding of the baffled wind,
Hears Winter calling all his terrors
round,⁴⁹⁰
And, blest within himself, he shrinks not
from the sound.

Through Nature's vale his homely plea-
sures glide,
Unstained by envy, discontent, and
pride;
The bound of all his vanity, to deck,
With one bright bell a favourite heifer's
neck;⁴⁹⁵
Well pleased upon some simple annual
feast,
Remembered half the year and hoped the
rest,
If dairy-produce, from his inner hoard,
Of thrice ten summers dignify the board.
—Alas! in every clime a flying ray⁵⁰⁰
Is all we have to cheer our wintry way;
And here the unwilling mind may more
than trace
The general sorrows of the human race:
The churlish gales of penury, that blow
Cold as the north-wind o'er a waste of
snow,⁵⁰⁵
To them the gentle groups of bliss deny
That on the noon-day bank of leisure lie.

¹ As Schreck-Horn, the pike of terror; Wetter-
Horn, the pike of storms, &c., &c.

Yet more;—compelled by Powers which
only deign
That *solitary* man disturb their reign,
Powers that support an unremitting strife
With all the tender charities of life,⁵¹¹
Full oft the father, when his sons have
grown
To manhood, seems their title to disown;
And from his nest amid the storms of
heaven
Drives, eagle-like, those sons as he was
driven;⁵¹⁵
With stern composure watches to the
plain—
And never, eagle-like, beholds again!

When long familiar joys are all re-
signed,
Why does their sad remembrance haunt
the mind?
Lo! where through flat Batavia's willowy
groves,⁵²⁰
Or by the lazy Seine, the exile roves;
O'er the curled waters Alpine measures
swell,
And search the affections to their inmost
cell;
Sweet poison spreads along the listener's
veins,
Turning past pleasures into mortal pains;
Poison, which not a frame of steel can
brave,⁵²⁶
Bows his young head with sorrow to the
grave.³

Gay lark of hope, thy silent song re-
sume!
Ye flattering eastern lights, once more
the hills illumine!
Fresh gales and dews of life's delicious
morn,⁵³⁰
And thou, lost fragrance of the heart,
return!
Alas! the little joy to man allowed
Fades like the lustre of an evening cloud;
Or like the beauty in a flower installed,
Whose season was, and cannot be re-
called.⁵³⁵
Yet, when opprest by sickness, grief, or
care,
And taught that pain is pleasure's natural
heir,
We still confide in more than we can
know;
Death would be else the favourite friend
of woe.

'Mid savage rocks, and seas of snow
that shine,⁵⁴⁰
Between interminable tracts of pine,
Within a temple stands an awful shrine,

² The well-known effect of the famous air, called
in French *Ranz des Vaches*, upon the Swiss troops.

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH

By an uncertain light revealed, that falls
On the mute Image and the troubled
walls.

Oh! give not me that eye of hard dis-
dain

That views, undimmed, Einsiedlen's¹
wretched fane.

While ghastly faces through the gloom
appear,

Abortive joy, and hope that works in
fear;

While prayer contends with silenced
agony,

Surely in other thoughts contempt may
die.

If the sad grave of human ignorance bear
One flower of hope—oh, pass and leave it
there!

The tall sun, pausing on an Alpine
spire,

Flings o'er the wilderness a stream of fire:
Now meet we other pilgrims ere the
day

Close on the remnant of their weary way;
While they are drawing toward the sacred
floor

Where, so they fondly think, the worm
shall gnaw no more.

How gaily murmur and how sweetly taste
The fountains² reared for them amid the
waste!

Their thirst they slake:—they wash their
toil-worn feet,

And some with tears of joy each other
greet.

Yes, I must see you when ye first behold
Those holy turrets tipped with evening
gold,

In that glad moment will for you a sigh

Be heaved of charitable sympathy;

In that glad moment when your hands
are prest

In mute devotion on the thankful breast!

Last, let us turn to Chamouny that
shields

With rocks and gloomy woods her fertile
fields:

Five streams of ice amid her cots descend,
And with wild flowers and blooming
orchards blend;—

A scene more fair than what the Grecian
feigns

Of purple lights and ever-vernal plains;
Here all the seasons revel hand in
hand:

'Mid lawns and shades by breezy rivulets
fanned,

They sport beneath that mountain's
matchless height

That holds no commerce with the sum-
mer night.

From age to age, throughout his lonely
bounds

The crash of ruin fitfully resounds; 580
Appalling havoc! but serene his brow,

Where daylight lingers on perpetual
snow;

Glitter the stars above, and all is black
below.

What marvel then if many a Wanderer
sigh,

While roars the sullen Arve in anger
by,

That not for thy reward, unrivall'd Vale!
Waves the ripe harvest in the autumnal
gale;

That thou, the slave of slaves, art doomed
to pine

And droop, while no Italian arts are
thine,

To soothe or cheer, to soften or refine. 590

Hail Freedom! whether it was mine to
stray,

With shrill winds whistling round my
lonely way,

On the bleak sides of Cumbria's heath-
clad moors,

Or where dank sea-weed lashes Scotland's
shores;

To scent the sweets of Piedmont's breath-
ing rose,

And orange gale that o'er Lugano blows;
Still have I found, where Tyranny pre-
vails,

That virtue languishes and pleasure falls,
While the remotest hamlets blessings
share

In thy loved presence known, and only
there;

Heart-blessings—outward treasures too
which the eye

Of the sun peeping through the clouds
can spy,

And every passing breeze will testify.
There, to the porch, belike with jasmine
bound

Or woodbine wreaths, a smoother path is
wound;

The housewife there a brighter garden
sees,

Where hum on busier wing her happy
bees;

On infant cheeks there fresher roses blow;
And grey-haired men look up with livelier
brow,—

To greet the traveller needing food and
rest;

Housed for the night. or but a half-hour's
guest.

¹ This shrine is resorted to, from a hope of relief,
by multitudes, from every corner of the Catholic
world, labouring under mental or bodily afflictions.

² Rude fountains built and covered with sheds for
the accommodation of the Pilgrims, in their ascent
of the mountain.

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES, ETC.

And oh, fair France! though now the
traveller sees
Thy three-striped banner fluctuate on the
breeze;
Though martial songs have banished
songs of love,
And nightingales desert the village grove,
Scared by the fife and rumbling drum's
alarms,
And the short thunder, and the flash of
arms;
That cease not till night falls, when far
and nigh,
Sole sound, the Sourd¹ prolongs his
mournful cry;
—Yet hast thou found that Freedom
spreads her power
Beyond the cottage hearth, the cottage-
door:
All nature smiles, and owns beneath her
eyes
Her fields peculiar, and peculiar skies.
Yes, as I roamed where Loiret's waters
glide
Through rustling aspens heard from side
to side,
When from October clouds a milder light
Fell where the blue flood rippled into
white;
Methought from every cot the watchful
bird
Crowed with ear-piercing power till then
unheard;
Each clacking mill, that broke the mur-
muring streams,
Rocked the charmed thought in more
delightful dreams;
Chasing those pleasant dreams, the falling
leaf
Awoke a fainter sense of moral grief;
The measured echo of the distant flail
Wound in more welcome cadence down
the vale;
With more majestic course² the water
rolled,
And ripening foliage shone with richer
gold.
—But foes are gathering—Liberty must
raise
Red on the hills her beacon's far-seen
blaze;
Must bid the tocsin ring from tower to
tower!—
Nearer and nearer comes the trying hour!
Rejoice, brave Land, though pride's per-
verted ire
Rouse hell's own aid, and wrap thy fields
in fire:

¹ An insect so called, which emits a short, melan-
choly cry, heard at the close of the summer evenings,
on the banks of the Loire.

² The duties upon many parts of the French rivers
were so exorbitant, that the poorer people, deprived
of the benefit of water carriage, were obliged to
transport their goods by land.

Lo, from the flames a great and glorious
birth;
As if a new-made heaven were hailing a
new earth!
—All cannot be: the promise is too fair
For creatures doomed to breathe terres-
trial air:
Yet not for this will sober reason frown
Upon that promise, nor the hope disown;
She knows that only from high aims
ensue
Rich guerdons, and to them alone are due.

Great God! by whom the strifes of men
are weighed
In an impartial balance, give thine aid
To the just cause; and, oh! do thou pre-
side
Over the mighty stream now spreading
wide:
So shall its waters, from the heavens
supplied
In copious showers, from earth by whole-
some springs,
Brood o'er the long-parched lands with
Nile-like wings!
And grant that every sceptred child of
clay
Who cries presumptuous, 'Here the flood
shall stay,'
May in its progress see thy guiding hand,
And cease the acknowledged purpose to
withstand;
Or, swept in anger from the insulted
shore,
Sink with his servile bands, to rise no
more!

To-night, my Friend, within this hum-
ble cot
Be scorn and fear and hope alike forgot
In timely sleep; and when, at break of
day,
On the tall peaks the glistening sunbeams
play,
With a light heart our course we may
renew,
The first whose footsteps print the moun-
tain dew.

VII

LINES

Left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree, which stands near
the lake of Esthwaite, on a desolate part of the
shore, commanding a beautiful prospect.

[Begun 1787.—Completed 1795.—Published 1798.]

NAY, Traveller! rest. This lonely Yew-
tree stands
Far from all human dwelling: what if
here
No sparkling rivulet spread the verdant
herb?

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH

What if the bee love not these barren
boughs?

Yet, if the wind breathe soft, the curling
waves,
That break against the shore, shall lull
thy mind

By one soft impulse saved from vacancy.

—Who he was
That piled these stones and with the
mossy sod

First covered, and here taught this aged
Tree

With its dark arms to form a circling
bower,

I well remember.—He was one who
owned

No common soul. In youth by science
nursed,

And led by nature into a wild scene
Of lofty hopes, he to the world went
forth

A favoured Being, knowing no desire
Which genius did not hallow; 'gainst the
taint

Of dissolute tongues, and jealousy, and
hate,

And scorn,—against all enemies pre-
pared,

All but neglect. The world, for so it
thought,

Owed him no service; wherefore he at
once

With indignation turned himself away,
And with the food of pride sustained his
soul

In solitude.—Stranger! these gloomy
boughs

Had charms for him; and here he loved
to sit,

His only visitants a straggling sheep,
The stone-chat, or the glancing sand-
piper:

And on these barren rocks, with fern and
heath,

And juniper and thistle, sprinkled o'er,
Fixing his downcast eye, he many an
hour

A morbid pleasure nourished, tracing
here

An emblem of his own unfruitful life:
And, lifting up his head, he then would
gaze

On the more distant scene,—how lovely
'tis

Thou seest,—and he would gaze till it
became

Far lovelier, and his heart could not
sustain

The beauty, still more beauteous! Nor,
that time,

When nature had subdued him to herself,
Would he forget those Beings to whose
minds

Warm from the labours of benevolence

40

The world, and human life, appeared a
scene

Of kindred loveliness: then he would sigh,
Inly disturbed, to think that others felt

What he must never feel: and so, lost
Man!

On visionary views would fancy feed, 45
Till his eye streamed with tears. In this
deep vale

He died,—this seat his only monument.

If Thou be one whose heart the holy
forms

Of young imagination have kept pure,
Stranger! henceforth be warned; and
know that pride,

Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
Is littleness; that he who feels contempt

For any living thing, hath faculties
Which he has never used; that thought

with him
Is in its infancy. The man whose eye 55
Is ever on himself doth look on one,

The least of Nature's works, one who
might move

The wise man to that scorn which wisdom
holds

Unlawful, ever. O be wiser, Thou!
Instructed that true knowledge leads to
love;

True dignity abides with him alone
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
In lowliness of heart.

60

VIII

GUILT AND SORROW

OR

INCIDENTS UPON SALISBURY PLAIN

[Begun 1791–92.—Completed 1793–94.—Pub-
lished 1842.]

ADVERTISEMENT,

PREFIXED TO THE FIRST EDITION OF THIS POEM,
PUBLISHED IN 1842.

NOR less than one-third of the following poem, though it has from time to time been altered in the expression, was published so far back as the year 1798, under the title of 'The Female Vagrant.' The extract is of such length that an apology seems to be required for reprinting it here: but it was necessary to restore it to its original position, or the rest would have been unintelligible. The whole was written before the close of the year 1794, and I will detail, rather as matter of literary biography than for any other reason, the circumstances under which it was produced.

During the latter part of the summer of 1793, having passed a month in the Isle of Wight, in view of the fleet which was then preparing for sea off Portsmouth at the commencement of the war, I left the place with melancholy forebodings. The American war was still fresh in memory. The struggle which was beginning, and which many

GUILT AND SORROW

thought would be brought to a speedy close by the irresistible arms of Great Britain being added to those of the Allies, I was assured in my own mind would be of long continuance, and productive of distress and misery beyond all possible calculation. This conviction was pressed upon me by having been a witness, during a long residence in revolutionary France, of the spirit which prevailed in that country. After leaving the Isle of Wight, I spent two days in wandering on foot over Salisbury Plain, which, though cultivation was then widely spread through parts of it, had upon the whole a still more impressive appearance than it now retains.

The monuments and traces of antiquity, scattered in abundance over that region, led me unavoidably to compare what we know or guess of those remote times with certain aspects of modern society, and with calamities, principally those consequent upon war, to which, more than other classes of men, the poor are subject. In those reflections, joined with particular facts that had come to my knowledge, the following stanzas originated.

In conclusion, to obviate some distraction in the minds of those who are well acquainted with Salisbury Plain, it may be proper to say that, of the features described as belonging to it, one or two are taken from other desolate parts of England.

I

A TRAVELLER on the skirt of Sarum's
Plain
Pursued his vagrant way, with feet half
bare;
Stooping his gait, but not as if to gain
Help from the staff he bore; for mien
and air
Were hardy, though his cheek seemed
worn with care
Both of the time to come, and time long
fled:
Down fell in straggling locks his thin grey
hair;
A coat he wore of military red
But faded, and stuck o'er with many a
patch and shred.

II

While thus he journeyed, step by step
led on,
He saw and passed a stately inn, full
sure
That welcome in such house for him was
none.
No board inscribed the needy to allure
Hung there, no bush proclaimed to old
and poor
And desolate, 'Here you will find a
friend!'
The pendent grapes glittered above the
door;—
On he must pace, perchance till night
descend,
Where'er the dreary roads their bare
white lines extend.

III

The gathering clouds grew red with
stormy fire,
In streaks diverging wide and mounting
high;
That inn he long had passed; the distant
spire,
Which oft as he looked back had fixed his
eye,
Was lost, though still he looked, in the
blank sky.
Perplexed and comfortless he gazed
around,
And scarce could any trace of man descry,
Save cornfields stretched and stretching
without bound;
But where the sower dwelt was nowhere
to be found.

IV

No tree was there, no meadow's pleasant
green,
No brook to wet his lip or soothe his ear;
Long files of corn-stacks here and there
were seen,
But not one dwelling-place his heart to
cheer.
Some labourer, thought he, may per-
chance be near;
And so he sent a feeble shout—in vain;
No voice made answer, he could only hear
Winds rustling over plots of unripe grain,
Or whistling thro' thin grass along the
unfurrowed plain.

V

Long had he fancied each successive slope
Concealed some cottage, whither he
might turn
And rest; but now along heaven's dark-
ening cope
The crows rushed by in eddies, homeward
borne.
Thus warned he sought some shepherd's
spreading thorn
Or hovel from the storm to shield his
head,
But sought in vain; for now, all wild,
forlorn,
And vacant, a huge waste around him
spread;
The wet cold ground, he feared, must be
his only bed.

VI

And be it so—for to the chill night shower
And the sharp wind his head he oft hath
bared;
A Sailor he, who many a wretched hour
Hath toiled for, landing after labour hard,
Full long endured in hope of just reward,
He to an armed fleet was forced away
By seamen, who perhaps themselves had
shared

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH

Like fate; was hurried off, a helpless prey,
'Gainst all that in *his* heart, or theirs
perhaps, said nay.

VII

For years the work of carnage did not
cease, 55
And death's dire aspect daily he surveyed,
Death's minister; then came his glad re-
lease,
And hope returned, and pleasure fondly
made
Her dwelling in his dreams. By Fancy's
aid
The happy husband flies, his arms to
throw 60
Round his wife's neck; the prize of vic-
tory laid
In her full lap, he sees such sweet tears
flow
As if thenceforth nor pain nor trouble she
could know.

VIII

Vain hope! for fraud took all that he had
earned.
The lion roars and gluts his tawny brood
Even in the desert's heart; but he, re-
turned, 66
Bears not to those he loves their needful
food.
His home approaching, but in such a
mood
That from his sight his children might
have run,
He met a traveller, robbed him, shed his
blood; 70
And when the miserable work was done
He fled, a vagrant since, the murderer's
fate to shun.

IX

From that day forth no place to him
could be
So lonely, but that thence might come a
pang 74
Brought from without to inward misery.
Now, as he plodded on, with sullen clang
A sound of chains along the desert rang;
He looked, and saw upon a gibbet high
A human body that in irons swang,
Uplifted by the tempest whirling by; 80
And, hovering, round it often did a raven
fly.

X

It was a spectacle which none might view,
In spot so savage, but with shuddering
pain;
Nor only did for him at once renew
All he had feared from man, but roused
a train 85
Of the mind's phantoms, horrible as vain.
The stones, as if to cover him from day,
Rolled at his back along the living plain;

He fell, and without sense or motion lay;
But, when the trance was gone, feebly
pursued his way. 90

XI

As one whose brain habitual frenzy fires
Owes to the fit in which his soul hath
tossed
Profounder quiet, when the fit retires,
Even so the dire phantasma which had
crossed
His sense, in sudden vacancy quite lost,
Left his mind still as a deep evening
stream. 96
Nor, if accosted now, in thought en-
grossed,
Moody, or inly troubled, would he seem
To traveller who might talk of any casual
theme.

XII

Hurtle the clouds in deeper darkness
piled, 100
Gone is the raven timely rest to seek;
He seemed the only creature in the wild
On whom the elements their rage might
wreak;
Save that the bustard, of those regions
bleak
Shy tenant, seeing by the uncertain light
A man there wandering, gave a mournful
shriek, 106
And half upon the ground, with strange
affright,
Forced hard against the wind a thick
unwieldy flight.

XIII

All, all was cheerless to the horizon's
bound;
The weary eye—which, wheresoe'er it
strays, 110
Marks nothing but the red sun's setting
round,
Or on the earth strange lines, in former
days
Left by gigantic arms—at length surveys
What seems an antique castle spreading
wide;
Hoary and naked are its walls, and raise
Their brow sublime: in shelter there to
bide 116
He turned, while rain poured down
smoking on every side.

XIV

Pile of Stone-henge! so proud to hint yet
keep
Thy secrets, thou that lov'st to stand and
hear
The Plain resounding to the whirlwind's
sweep, 120
Inmate of lonesome Nature's endless
year;

GUILT AND SORROW

Even if thou saw'st the giant wicker rear
For sacrifice its throngs of living men,
Before thy face did ever wretch appear,
Who in his heart had groaned with dead-
lier pain¹²⁵
Than he who, tempest-driven, thy shelter
now would gain?

xv

Within that fabric of mysterious form
Winds met in conflict, each by turns
supreme;
And, from the perilous ground dislodged,
through storm
And rain he wildered on, no moon to
stream¹³⁰
From gulf of parting clouds one friendly
beam,
Nor any friendly sound his footsteps led;
Once did the lightning's faint disastrous
gleam
Disclose a naked guide-post's double head,
Sight which, tho' lost at once, a gleam of
pleasure shed.¹³⁵

xvi

No swinging sign-board creaked from
cottage elm
To stay his steps with faintness overcome;
'Twas dark and void as ocean's watery
realm
Roaring with storms beneath night's
starless gloom;
No gipsy cower'd o'er fire of furze or
broom;¹⁴⁰
No labourer watched his red kiln glaring
bright,
Nor taper glimmered dim from sick
man's room;
Along the waste no line of mournful light
From lamp of lonely toll-gate streamed
athwart the night.

xvii

At length, though hid in clouds, the moon
arose;¹⁴⁵
The downs were visible—and now revealed
A structure stands, which two bare slopes
enclose.
It was a spot where, ancient vows fulfilled,
Kind pious hands did to the Virgin build
A lonely Spital, the belated swain¹⁵⁰
From the night terrors of that waste to
shield:
But now no human being could remain,
And now the walls are named the 'Dead
House' of the plain.

xviii

Though he had little cause to love the abode
Of man, or covet sight of mortal face,¹⁵⁵
Yet when faint beams of light that ruin
showed,
How glad he was at length to find some
trace

Of human shelter in that dreary place.
Till to his flock the early shepherd goes,
Here shall much-needed sleep his frame
embrace.¹⁶⁰
In a dry nook where fern the floor be-
strows
He lays his stiffened limbs,—his eyes be-
gin to close;

xix

When hearing a deep sigh, that seemed
to come
From one who mourned in sleep, he
raised his head,
And saw a woman in the naked room¹⁶⁵
Outstretched, and turning on a restless
bed:
The moon a wan dead light around her
shed.
He waked her—spake in tone that would
not fail,
He hoped, to calm her mind; but ill he
sped,
For of that ruin she had heard a tale¹⁷⁰
Which now with freezing thoughts did all
her powers assail;

xx

Had heard of one who, forced from
storms to shroud,
Felt the loose walls of this decayed
Retreat
Rock to incessant neighings shrill and
loud,
While his horse pawed the floor with
furious heat;¹⁷⁵
Till on a stone, that sparkled to his feet,
Struck, and still struck again, the troubled
horse:
The man half raised the stone with pain
and sweat,
Half raised, for well his arm might lose
its force
Disclosing the grim head of a late mur-
dered corse.¹⁸⁰

xxi

Such tale of this lone mansion she had
learned,
And when that shape, with eyes in sleep
half drowned,
By the moon's sullen lamp she first dis-
cerned,
Cold stony horror all her senses bound.
Her he addressed in words of cheering
sound;¹⁸⁵
Recovering heart, like answer did she
make;
And well it was that of the corse there
found
In converse that ensued she nothing
spake;
She knew not what dire pangs in him
such tale could wake.

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH

XXII

But soon his voice and words of kind
 intent¹⁹⁰
 Banished that dismal thought; and now
 the wind
 In fainter howlings told its *rage* was spent:
 Meanwhile discourse ensued of various
 kind,
 Which by degrees a confidence of mind
 And mutual interest failed not to create.
 And, to a natural sympathy resigned, ¹⁹⁶
 In that forsaken building where they sate
 The Woman thus retraced her own un-
 toward fate.

XXIII

'By Derwent's side my father dwelt—a man
 Of virtuous life, by pious parents bred;
 And I believe that, soon as I began ²⁰¹
 To lisp, he made me kneel beside my bed,
 And in his hearing there my prayers I
 said:
 And afterwards, by my good father
 taught,
 I read, and loved the books in which I
 read; ²⁰⁵
 For books in every neighbouring house
 I sought,
 And nothing to my mind a sweeter plea-
 sure brought.

XXIV

'A little croft we owned—a plot of corn,
 A garden stored with peas, and mint, and
 thyme,
 And flowers for posies, oft on Sunday
 morn ²¹⁰
 Plucked while the church bells rang their
 earliest chime.
 Can I forget our freaks at shearing time!
 My hen's rich nest through long grass
 scarce espied;
 The cowslip-gathering in June's dewy
 prime;
 The swans that with white chests up-
 reared in pride ²¹⁵
 Rushing and racing came to meet me at
 the waterside!

XXV

'The staff I well remember which upbore
 The bending body of my active sire;
 His seat beneath the honied sycamore
 Where the bees hummed, and chair by
 winter fire; ²²⁰
 When market-morning came, the neat
 attire
 With which, though bent on haste, myself
 I decked;
 Our watchful house-dog, that would tease
 and tire
 The stranger till its barking-fit I checked;
 The red-breast, known for years, which
 at my casement pecked. ²²⁵

XXVI

'The suns of twenty summers danced
 along,—
 Too little marked how fast they rolled
 away:
 But, through severe mischance and cruel
 wrong,
 My father's substance fell into decay:
 We toiled and struggled, hoping for a day
 When Fortune might put on a kinder
 look; ²³¹
 But vain were wishes, efforts vain as they;
 He from his old hereditary nook
 Must part; the summons came;—our
 final leave we took.

XXVII

'It was indeed a miserable hour ²³⁵
 When, from the last hill-top, my sire sur-
 veyed,
 Peering above the trees, the steeple tower
 That on his marriage day sweet music
 made!
 Till then he hoped his bones might there
 be laid
 Close by my mother in their native
 bowers: ²⁴⁰
 Bidding me trust in God, he stood and
 prayed;—
 I could not pray:—through tears that fell
 in showers
 Glimmered our dear-loved home, alas!
 no longer ours!

XXVIII

'There was a Youth whom I had loved
 so long,
 That when I loved him not I cannot say:
 'Mid the green mountains many a
 thoughtless song ²⁴⁶
 We two had sung, like gladsome birds in
 May;
 When we began to tire of childish play,
 We seemed still more and more to prize
 each other;
 We talked of marriage and our marriage
 day; ²⁵⁰
 And I in truth did love him like a brother,
 For never could I hope to meet with such
 another.

XXIX

'Two years were passed since to a distant
 town
 He had repaired to ply a gainful trade:
 What tears of bitter grief, till then un-
 known, ²⁵⁵
 What tender vows our last sad kiss de-
 layed!
 To him we turned:—we had no other aid:
 Like one revived, upon his neck I wept;
 And her whom he had loved in joy, he
 said,

GUILT AND SORROW

He well could love in grief; his faith he
kept;
And in a quiet home once more my father
slept. 260

XXX

'We lived in peace and comfort; and
were blest
With daily bread, by constant toil sup-
plied.
Three lovely babes had lain upon my
breast;
And often, viewing their sweet smiles, I
sighed, 265
And knew not why. My happy father
died,
When threatened war reduced the chil-
dren's meal:
Thrice happy! that for him the grave
could hide
The empty loom, cold hearth, and silent
wheel,
And tears which flowed for ills which
patience might not heal. 270

XXXI

'Twas a hard change; an evil time was
come;
We had no hope, and no relief could
gain:
But soon, with proud parade, the noisy
drum
Beat round to clear the streets of want
and pain.
My husband's arms now only served to
strain 275
Me and his children hungering in his
view;
In such dismay my prayers and tears
were vain:
To join those miserable men he flew,
And now to the sea-coast, with numbers
more, we drew.

XXXII

'There were we long neglected, and we
bore 280
Much sorrow ere the fleet its anchor
weighed;
Green fields before us, and our native
shore,
We breathed a pestilential air, that made
Ravage for which no knell was heard.
We prayed
For our departure; wished and wished—
nor knew, 285
'Mid that long sickness and those hopes
delayed,
That happier days we never more must
view.
The parting signal streamed—at last the
land withdrew.

XXXIII

'But the calm summer season now was
past.
On as we drove, the equinoctial deep 290
Ran mountains high before the howling
blast,
And many perished in the whirlwind's
sweep.
We gazed with terror on their gloomy
sleep,
Untaught that soon such anguish must
ensue,
Our hopes such harvest of affliction reap,
That we the mercy of the waves should
rue: 296
We reached the western world, a poor
devoted crew.

XXXIV

'The pains and plagues that on our heads
came down,
Disease and famine, agony and fear, 299
In wood or wilderness, in camp or town,
It would unman the firmest heart to hear.
All perished—all in one remorseless year,
Husband and children! one by one, by
sword
And ravenous plague, all perished: every
tear
Dried up, despairing, desolate, on board
A British ship I waked, as from a trance
restored. 306

XXXV

Here paused she, of all present thought
forlorn,
Nor voice, nor sound, that moment's pain
expressed,
Yet Nature, with excess of grief o'er-
borne,
From her full eyes their watery load re-
leased. 310
He too was mute: and, ere her weeping
ceased,
He rose, and to the ruin's portal went,
And saw the dawn opening the silvery
east
With rays of promise, north and south-
ward sent;
And soon with crimson fire kindled the
firmament. 315

XXXVI

'O come,' he cried, 'come, after weary
night
Of such rough storm, this happy change
to view.
So forth she came, and eastward looked;
the sight
Over her brow like dawn of gladness
threw;
Upon her cheek, to which its youthful
hue 320

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH

Seemed to return, dried the last lingering
 tear,
 And from her grateful heart a fresh one
 drew:
 The whilst her comrade to her pensive
 cheer
 Tempered fit words of hope; and the lark
 warbled near.

XXXVII

They looked and saw a lengthening road,
 and wain
 That rang down a bare slope not far re-
 mote:
 The barrows glistened bright with drops
 of rain,
 Whistled the waggoner with merry note,
 The cock far off sounded his clarion
 throat;
 But town, or farm, or hamlet, none they
 viewed,
 Only were told there stood a lonely cot
 A long mile thence. While thither they
 pursued
 Their way, the Woman thus her mournful
 tale renewed.

XXXVIII

'Peaceful as this immeasurable plain
 Is now, by beams of dawning light im-
 prest,
 In the calm sunshine slept the glittering
 main;
 The very ocean hath its hour of rest.
 I too forgot the heavings of my breast.
 How quiet 'round me ship and ocean
 were!
 As quiet all within me. I was blest,
 And looked, and fed upon the silent air
 Until it seemed to bring a joy to my
 despair.

XXXIX

'Ah! how unlike those late terrific sleeps,
 And groans that rage of racking famine
 spoke;
 The unburied dead that lay in festering
 heaps,
 The breathing pestilence that rose like
 smoke,
 The shriek that from the distant battle
 broke,
 The mine's dire earthquake, and the
 pallid host
 Driven by the bomb's incessant thunder-
 stroke
 To loathsome vaults, where heart-sick
 anguish tossed,
 Hope died, and fear itself in agony was lost!

XL

'Some mighty gulf of separation passed,
 I seemed transported to another world;
 A thought resigned with pain, when from
 the mast

The impatient mariner the sail unfurled,
 And, whistling, called the wind that
 hardly curled
 The silent sea. From the sweet thoughts
 of home
 And from all hope I was for ever hurled.
 For me—farthest from earthly port to
 roam
 Was best, could I but shun the spot where
 man might come.

XLI

'And oft I thought (my fancy was so
 strong)
 That I, at last, a resting-place had found;
 "Here will I dwell," said I, "my whole
 life long,
 Roaming the illimitable waters round;
 Here will I live, of all but heaven dis-
 owned,
 And end my days upon the peaceful
 flood."—
 To break my dream the vessel reached its
 bound;
 And homeless near a thousand homes I
 stood,
 And near a thousand tables pined and
 wanted food.

XLII

'No help I sought; in sorrow turned
 adrift,
 Was hopeless, as if cast on some bare
 rock;
 Nor morsel to my mouth that day did lift,
 Nor raised my hand at any door to knock.
 I lay where, with his drowsy mates, the
 cock
 From the cross-timber of an outhouse
 hung:
 Dismally tolled, that night, the city clock!
 At morn my sick heart hunger scarcely
 stung,
 Nor to the beggar's language could I fit
 my tongue.

XLIII

'So passed a second day; and, when the
 third
 Was come, I tried in vain the crowd's
 resort.
 —In deep despair, by frightful wishes
 stirred,
 Near the sea-side I reached a ruined fort;
 There, pains which nature could no more
 support,
 With blindness linked, did on my vitals
 fall;
 And, after many interruptions short
 Of hideous sense, I sank, nor step could
 crawl:
 Unsought for was the help that did my
 life recall.

GUILT AND SORROW

XLIV

'Borne to a hospital, I lay with brain
Drowsy and weak, and shattered memory;
I heard my neighbours in their beds complain
Of many things which never troubled me—
Of feet still bustling round with busy glee,
Of looks where common kindness had no part,
Of service done with cold formality,
Fretting the fever round the languid heart,
And groans which, as they said, might make a dead man start.

XLV

'These things just served to stir the slumbering sense,
Nor pain nor pity in my bosom raised.
With strength did memory return; and, thence
Dismissed, again on open day I gazed,
At houses, men, and common light, amazed.
The lanes I sought, and, as the sun retired,
Came where beneath the trees a faggot blazed;
The travellers saw me weep, my fate inquired,
And gave me food—and rest, more welcome, more desired.

XLVI

'Rough potters seemed they, trading soberly
With panniered asses driven from door to door;
But life of happier sort set forth to me,
And other joys my fancy to allure—
The bag-pipe dinning on the midnight moor
In barn uplighted; and companions boon,
Well met from far with revelry secure
Among the forest glades, while jocund June
Rolled fast along the sky his warm and genial moon.

XLVII

'But ill they suited me—those journeys dark
O'er moor and mountain, midnight theft to hatch!
To charm the surly house-dog's faithful bark,
Or hang on tip-toe at the lifted latch.
The gloomy lantern, and the dim blue match,
The black disguise, the warning whistle shrill,
And ear still busy on its nightly watch,

Were not for me, brought up in nothing ill:
Besides, on griefs so fresh my thoughts were brooding still.

XLVIII

'What could I do, unaided and unblest?
My father! gone was every friend of thine:
And kindred of dead husband are at best
Small help; and, after marriage such as mine,
With little kindness would to me incline.
Nor was I then for toil or service fit;
My deep-drawn sighs no effort could confine;
In open air forgetful would I sit
Whole hours, with idle arms in moping sorrow knit.

XLIX

'The roads I paced, I loitered through the fields;
Contentedly, yet sometimes self-accused,
Trusted my life to what chance bounty yields,
Now coldly given, now utterly refused.
The ground I for my bed have often used:
But what afflicts my peace with keenest ruth,
Is that I have my inner self abused,
Forgone the home delight of constant truth,
And clear and open soul, so prized in fearless youth.

L

'Through tears the rising sun I oft have viewed,
Through tears have seen him towards that world descend
Where my poor heart lost all its fortitude:
Three years a wanderer now my course I bend—
Oh! tell me whither—for no earthly friend
Have I.'—She ceased, and weeping turned away;
As if because her tale was at an end,
She wept; because she had no more to say
Of that perpetual weight which on her spirit lay.

LI

True sympathy the Sailor's looks expressed,
His looks—for pondering he was mute the while.
Of social Order's care for wretchedness,
Of Time's sure help to calm and reconcile,
Joy's second spring and Hope's long-treasured smile,
'Twas not for him to speak—a man so tried.
Yet, to relieve her heart, in friendly style

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH

Proverbial words of comfort he applied,
And not in vain, while they went pacing
side by side.

LII

Ere long, from heaps of turf, before their
sight, 460
Together smoking in the sun's slant beam,
Rise various wreaths that into one unite
Which high and higher mounts with
silver gleam:

Fair spectacle,—but instantly a scream
Thence bursting shrill did all remark pre-
vent; 465
They paused, and heard a hoarser voice
blaspheme,
And female cries. Their course they
thither bent,
And met a man who foamed with anger
vehement.

LIII

A woman stood with quivering lips and
pale,
And, pointing to a little child that lay 470
Stretched on the ground, began a piteous
tale;

How in a simple freak of thoughtless play
He had provoked his father, who straight-
way,
As if each blow were deadlier than the
last,
Struck the poor innocent. Pallid with
dismay 475
The Soldier's Widow heard and stood
aghast;
And stern looks on the man her grey-
haired Comrade cast.

LIV

His voice with indignation rising high
Such further deed in manhood's name
forbade;
The peasant, wild in passion, made reply
With bitter insult and revilings sad; 481
Asked him in scorn what business there
he had;
What kind of plunder he was hunting
now;
The gallows would one day of him be
glad;—
Though inward anguish damped the
Sailor's brow, 485
Yet calm he seemed as thoughts so
poignant would allow.

LV

Softly he stroked the child, who lay out-
stretched
With face to earth; and, as the boy turn-
ed round
His battered head, a groan the Sailor
fetched

As if he saw—there and upon that
ground— 490
Strange repetition of the deadly wound
He had himself inflicted. Through his
brain

At once the griding iron passage found;
Deluge of tender thoughts then rushed
again,
Nor could his sunken eyes the starting
tear restrain. 495

LVI

Within himself he said—What hearts
have we!
The blessing this a father gives his child!
Yet happy thou, poor boy! compared
with me,
Suffering not doing ill—fate far more
mild.
The stranger's looks and tears of wrath
beguiled 500
The father, and relenting thoughts awoke;
He kissed his son—so all was reconciled.
Then, with a voice which inward trouble
broke
Ere to his lips it came, the Sailor them
bespoke.

LVII

'Bad is the world, and hard is the world's
law 505
Even for the man who wears the warmest
fleece;
Much need have ye that time more closely
draw
The bond of nature, all unkindness cease,
And that among so few there still be
peace:
Else can ye hope but with such numerous
foes 510
Your pains shall ever with your years
increase?'—
While from his heart the appropriate
lesson flows,
A correspondent calm stole gently o'er his
woes.

LVIII

Forthwith the pair passed on; and down
they look
Into a narrow valley's pleasant scene 515
Where wreaths of vapour tracked a wind-
ing brook,
That babbled on through groves and
meadows green;
A low-roofed house peeped out the trees
between;
The dripping groves resound with cheer-
ful lays,
And melancholy lowings intervene 520
Of scattered herds, that in the meadow
graze,
Some amid lingering shade, some touched
by the sun's rays.

GUILT AND SORROW

LIX

They saw and heard, and, winding with
the road
Down a thick wood, they dropt into the
vale;
Comfort by prouder mansions unbe-
stowed 525
Their wearied frames, she hoped, would
soon regale.
Ere long they reached that cottage in the
dale:
It was a rustic inn;—the board was spread,
The milk-maid followed with her brim-
ming pail,
And lustily the master carved the bread,
Kindly the housewife pressed, and they in
comfort fed. 531

LX

Their breakfast done, the pair, though
loth, must part;
Wanderers whose course no longer now
agrees.
She rose and bade farewell! and, while
her heart
Struggled with tears nor could its sorrow
ease, 535
She left him there; for, clustering round
his knees,
With his oak-staff the cottage children
played;
And soon she reached a spot o'erhung
with trees
And banks of ragged earth; beneath the
shade
Across the pebbly road a little runnel
strayed. 540

LXI

A cart and horse beside the rivulet stood;
Chequering the canvas roof the sunbeams
shone.
She saw the carman bend to scoop the
flood
As the wain fronted her,—wherein lay
one, 544
A pale-faced Woman, in disease far gone.
The carman wet her lips as well behaved;
Bed under her lean body there was none,
Though even to die near one she most had
loved
She could not of herself those wasted
limbs have moved.

LXII

The Soldier's Widow learned with honest
pain 550
And homefelt force of sympathy sincere,
Why thus that worn-out wretch must
there sustain
The jolting road and morning air severe.
The wain pursued its way; and following
near

In pure compassion she her steps re-
traced 555
Far as the cottage. 'A sad sight is here,'
She cried aloud; and forth ran out in
haste
The friends whom she had left but a few
minutes past.

LXIII

While to the door with eager speed they
ran,
From her bare straw the Woman half
upraised 560
Her bony visage—gaunt and deadly wan;
No pity asking, on the group she gazed
With a dim eye, distracted and amazed;
Then sank upon her straw with feeble
moan.
Fervently cried the housewife—'God be
praised, 565
I have a house that I can call my own;
Nor shall she perish there, untended and
alone!'

LXIV

So in they bear her to the chimney seat,
And busily, though yet with fear, untie
Her garments, and, to warm her icy feet
And chafe her temples, careful hands
apply. 571
Nature reviving, with a deep-drawn sigh
She strove, and not in vain, her head to
rear;
Then said—'I thank you all; if I must die,
The God in heaven my prayers for you
will hear; 575
Till now I did not think my end had been
so near.

LXV

'Barred every comfort labour could pro-
cure,
Suffering what no endurance could as-
suage, 578
I was compelled to seek my father's door,
Though loth to be a burthen on his age.
But sickness stopped me in an early stage
Of my sad journey; and within the wain
They placed me—there to end life's pil-
grimage,
Unless beneath your roof I may remain:
For I shall never see my father's door
again. 585

LXVI

'My life, Heaven knows, hath long been
burthensome;
But, if I have not meekly suffered, meek
May my end be! Soon will this voice be
dumb:
Should child of mine e'er wander hither,
speak
Of me, say that the worm is on my
cheek.— 590

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH

Torn from our hut, that stood beside the

sea,
Near Portland lighthouse in a lonesome
creek,

My husband served in sad captivity
On shipboard, bound till peace or death
should set him free.

LXVII

'A sailor's wife I knew a widow's cares,
Yet two sweet little ones partook my
bed;

Hope cheered my dreams, and to my
daily prayers

Our heavenly Father granted each day's
bread;

Till one was found by stroke of violence
dead,

Whose body near our cottage chanced to
lie;

A dire suspicion drove us from our shed;
In vain to find a friendly face we try,

Nor could we live together those poor
boys and I;

LXVIII

'For evil tongues made oath how on that
day

My husband lurked about the neighbour-
hood;

Now he had fled, and whither none could
say,

And he had done the deed in the dark
wood—

Near his own home!—but he was mild
and good;

Never on earth was gentler creature
seen;

He'd not have robbed the raven of its
food.

My husband's loving kindness stood be-
tween

Me and all worldly harms and wrongs
however keen.'

LXIX

Alas! the thing she told with labouring
breath

The Sailor knew too well. That wicked-
ness

His hand had wrought; and when, in the
hour of death,

He saw his Wife's lips move his name to
bless

With her last words, unable to suppress
His anguish, with his heart he ceased to
strive;

And, weeping loud in this extreme dis-
tress,

He cried—'Do pity me! That thou
shouldst live

I neither ask nor wish—forgive me, but
forgive!'

LXX

To tell the change that Voice within her
wrought

Nature by sign or sound made no essay;
A sudden joy surprised expiring thought,

And every mortal pang dissolved away.
Borne gently to a bed, in death she lay;

Yet still, while over her the husband bent,
A look was in her face which seemed to

say,
'Be blest: by sight of thee from heaven
was sent

Peace to my parting soul, the fulness of
content.'

LXXI

She slept in peace,—his pulses throbbed
and stopped,

Breathless he gazed upon her face,—then
took

Her hand in his, and raised it, but both
dropped,

When on his own he cast a rueful look.
His ears were never silent; sleep forsook

His burning eyelids stretched and stiff as
lead;

All night from time to time under him
shook

The floor as he lay shuddering on his bed;
And oft he groaned aloud, 'O God, that
I were dead!'

LXXII

The Soldier's Widow lingered in the cot;
And, when he rose, he thanked her pious
care

Through which his Wife, to that kind
shelter brought,

Died in his arms; and with those thanks
a prayer

He breathed for her, and for that mer-
ciful pair.

The corse interred, not one hour he re-
mained

Beneath their roof, but to the open air
A burthen, now with fortitude sustained,

He bore within a breast where dreadful
quiet reigned.

LXXIII

Confirmed of purpose, fearlessly prepared
For act and suffering, to the city straight

He journeyed, and forthwith his crime
declared:

'And from your doom,' he added, 'now
I wait,

Nor let it linger long, the murderer's fate.'
Not ineffectual was that piteous claim:

'O welcome sentence which will end
though late,'

He said, 'the pangs that to my conscience
came

Out of that deed. My trust, Saviour! is
in thy name!'

THE BORDERERS

LXXIV

His fate was pitied. Him in iron
case
(Reader, forgive the intolerable thought)
They hung not:—no one on his form or
face
Could gaze, as on a show by idlers sought;

No kindred sufferer, to his death-place
brought
By lawless curiosity or chance,
When into storm the evening sky is
wrought,
Upon his swinging corse an eye can
glance,
And drop, as he once dropped, in misera-
ble trance.

THE BORDERERS

A TRAGEDY

[Composed 1795-96.—Published 1842.]

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MARMADUKE.
OSWALD.
WALLACE.
LACY.
LENNOX.
HERBERT.
WILFRED, *Servant to MARMADUKE.*
Host.

*Of the Band of
Borderers.*

Forester.
ELDRED, *a Peasant.*
Peasant, Pilgrims, &c.

IDONEA.
Female Beggar.
ELEANOR, *Wife of ELDRED.*

SCENE, *Borders of England and Scotland.*

TIME, *The Reign of Henry III.*

READERS already acquainted with my Poems will recognise, in the following composition, some eight or ten lines, which I have not scrupled to retain in the places where they originally stood. It is proper however to add that they would not have been used elsewhere, if I had foreseen the time when I might be induced to publish this Tragedy.
February 28, 1842.

ACT I

SCENE, *Road in a Wood*

WALLACE and LACY.

Lacy. The Troop will be impatient;
let us hie
Back to our post, and strip the Scottish
Foray
Of their rich Spoil, ere they recross the
Border.
—Pity that our young Chief will have no
part
In this good service.
Wal. Rather let us grieve
That, in the undertaking which has caused
His absence, he hath sought, whate'er his
aim,
Companionship with One of crooked
ways,
From whose perverted soul can come no
good
To our confiding, open-hearted, Leader.
Lacy. True; and, remembering how
the Band have proved
That Oswald finds small favour in our
sight,

Well may we wonder he has gained such
power

Over our much-loved Captain.

Wal. I have heard
Of some dark deed to which in early life
His passion drove him—then a Voyager
Upon the midland Sea. You knew his
bearing
In Palestine?

Lacy. Where he despised alike
Mohammedan and Christian. But enough,
Let us begone—the Band may else be
foiled.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter MARMADUKE and WILFRED.

Wil. Be cautious, my dear Master!

Mar. I perceive
That fear is like a cloak which old men
huddle
About their love, as if to keep it warm.

Wil. Nay, but I grieve that we should
part. This Stranger,

For such he is—

Mar. Your busy fancies, Wilfred,
Might tempt me to a smile; but what of
him?

Wil. You know that you have saved
his life.

Mar. I know it.
Wil. And that he hates you!—Pardon me, perhaps
That word was hasty.

Mar. *Fy!* no more of it.
Wil. Dear Master! gratitude's a heavy burden
To a proud Soul.—Nobody loves this Oswald—
Yourself, you do not love him.

Mar. I do more, I honour him. Strong feelings to his heart
Are natural; and from no one can be learnt
More of man's thoughts and ways than his experience
Has given him power to teach: and then for courage
And enterprise—what perils hath he shunned?
What obstacles hath he failed to overcome?

Answer these questions, from our common knowledge,
And be at rest.

Wil. Oh, Sir!
Mar. Peace, my good Wilfred; Repair to Liddesdale, and tell the Band
I shall be with them in two days at farthest.

Wil. May He whose eye is over all protect you! *[Exit.]*

Enter OSWALD [a bunch of plants in his hand].

Osw. This wood is rich in plants and curious simples,

Mar. *[looking at them].* The wild rose, and the poppy, and the nightshade:
Which is your favourite, Oswald?

Osw. That which, while it is Strong to destroy, is also strong to heal—
[Looking forward.]
Not yet in sight!—We'll saunter here awhile;

They cannot mount the hill, by us unseen.

Mar. *[a letter in his hand].* It is no common thing when one like you
Performs these delicate services, and therefore

I feel myself much bounden to you, Oswald;

'Tis a strange letter this!—You saw her write it?

Osw. And saw the tears with which she blotted it.

Mar. And nothing less would satisfy him?

Osw. No less; 55
For that another in his Child's affection Should hold a place, as if 'twere robbery,
He seemed to quarrel with the very thought.
Besides, I know not what strange prejudice

Is rooted in his mind; this Band of ours, Which you've collected for the noblest ends,

Along the confines of the Esk and Tweed To guard the Innocent—he calls us 'Outlaws.'

And, for yourself, in plain terms he asserts This garb was taken up that indolence
Might want no cover, and rapacity Be better fed.

Mar. Ne'er may I own the heart That cannot feel for one, helpless as he is.

Osw. Thou know'st me for a Man not easily moved,
Yet was I grievously provoked to think Of what I witnessed.

Mar. This day will suffice To end her wrongs.

Osw. But if the blind Man's tale Should yet be true?

Mar. Would it were possible! Did not the Soldier tell thee that himself, And others who survived the wreck, beheld

The Baron Herbert perish in the waves Upon the coast of Cyprus?

Osw. Yes, even so, And I had heard the like before: in sooth The tale of this his quondam Barony Is cunningly devised; and, on the back Of his forlorn appearance, could not fail To make the proud and vain his tributaries,

And stir the pulse of lazy charity. The seignories of Herbert are in Devon; We, neighbours of the Esk and Tweed: 'tis much

The Arch-impostor—

Mar. Treat him gently, Oswald; Though I have never seen his face, methinks,

There cannot come a day when I shall cease

To love him. I remember, when a Boy Of scarcely seven years' growth, beneath the Elm

That casts its shade over our village school, 'Twas my delight to sit and hear Idonea Repeat her Father's terrible adventures, Till all the band of playmates wept together;

And that was the beginning of my love. 95 And, through all converse of our later years,

An image of this old Man still was present, When I had been most happy. Pardon me If this be idly spoken.

Osw. See, they come, 99

Two Travellers!

Mar. *[points].* The woman is Idonea.

Osw. And leading Herbert.

Mar. We must let them pass— This thicket will conceal us.

[They step aside.]

Enter IDONEA, leading HERBERT blind.

Idon. Dear Father, you sigh deeply;
ever since

We left the willow shade by the brookside
Your natural breathing has been troubled.

Her. Nay, 105
You are too fearful; yet must I confess,
Our march of yesterday had better suited
A firmer step than mine.

Idon. That dismal Moor—
In spite of all the larks that cheered our
path,

I never can forgive it: but how steadily
You paced along, when the bewildering
moonlight 111

Mocked me with many a strange fantastic
shape!—

I thought the Convent never would
appear;

It seemed to move away from us; and yet
That you are thus the fault is mine; for
the air 115

Was soft and warm, no dew lay on the
grass,

And midway on the waste ere night had
fallen

I spied a Covert walled and roofed with
sods—

A miniature; belike some Shepherd-boy,
Who might have found a nothing-doing
hour 120

Heavier than work, raised it: within that
hut

We might have made a kindly bed of
heath,

And thankfully there rested side by side
Wrapped in our cloaks, and, with re-

cruted strength,
Have hailed the morning sun. But
cheerily, Father,— 125

That staff of yours, I could almost have
heart

To fling't away from you: you make no
use

Of me, or of my strength;—come, let me
feel

That you do press upon me. There—
indeed

You are quite exhausted. Let us rest
awhile 130

On this green bank. [*He sits down.*]

Her. [*after some time*]. Idonea, you are
silent,

And I divine the cause.

Idon. Do not reproach me:
I pondered patiently your wish and will

When I gave way to your request; and
now,

When I behold the ruins of that face, 135
Those eyeballs dark—dark beyond hope
of light,

And think that they were blasted for my
sake,

The name of Marmaduke is blown away:
Father, I would not change that sacred
feeling

For all this world can give.

Her. Nay, be composed: 140
Few minutes gone a faintness overspread
My frame, and I bethought me of two
things

I ne'er had heart to separate—my grave,
And thee, my Child!

Idon. Believe me, honoured Sire!
'Tis weariness that breeds these gloomy
fancies, 145

And you mistake the cause: you hear the
woods

Resound with music, could you see the
sun,

And look upon the pleasant face of
Nature—

Her. I comprehend thee—I should be
as cheerful

As if we two were twins; two songsters
bred 150

In the same nest, my spring-time one
with thine.

My fancies, fancies if they be, are such
As come, dear Child! from a far deeper
source

Than bodily weariness. While here we
sit

I feel my strength returning. The be-
quest 155

Of thy kind Patroness, which to receive
We have thus far adventured, will suffice

To save thee from the extreme of penury;
But when thy Father must lie down and
die,

How wilt thou stand alone?

Idon. Is he not strong? 160
Is he not valiant?

Her. Am I then so soon
Forgotten? have my warnings passed so
quickly

Out of thy mind? My dear, my only,
Child;

Thou wouldst be leaning on a broken
reed—

This Marmaduke—

Idon. O could you hear his voice: 165
Alas! you do not know him. He is one
(I wot not what ill tongue had wronged
him with you)

All gentleness and love. His face be-
speaks

A deep and simple meekness: and that
Soul,

Which with the motion of a virtuous act
Flashes a look of terror upon guilt, 171

Is, after conflict, quiet as the ocean,
By a miraculous finger stilled at once.

Her. Unhappy Woman!

Idon. Nay, it was my duty
Thus much to speak; but think not I
forget— 175

THE BORDERERS

[ACT I

Dear Father! how could I forget and live?—

You and the story of that doleful night
When, Antioch blazing to her topmost
towers,

You rushed into the murderous flames,
returned

Blind as the grave, but, as you oft have
told me,

Clasping your infant Daughter to your
heart.

Her. Thy Mother too!—scarce had I
gained the door,

I caught her voice; she threw herself
upon me,

I felt thy infant brother in her arms;
She saw my blasted face—a tide of

soldiers
That instant rushed between us, and I
heard

Her last death-shriek, distinct among a
thousand.

Idon. Nay, Father, stop not; let me
hear it all,

Her. Dear Daughter! precious relic of
that time—

For my old age, it doth remain with thee
To make it what thou wilt. Thou hast

been told,
That when, on our return from Palestine,

I found how my domains had been usurped,
I took thee in my arms, and we began

Our wanderings together. Providence
At length conducted us to Rossland,—

there,
Our melancholy story moved a Stranger

To take thee to her home—and for myself,
Soon after, the good Abbot of St. Cuth-

bert's
Supplied my helplessness with food and

raiment,
And, as thou know'st, gave me that

humble Cot
Where now we dwell.—For many years I

bore
Thy absence, till old age and fresh infir-

mities
Exacted thy return, and our reunion.

I did not think that, during that long
absence,

My Child, forgetful of the name of
Herbert,

Had given her love to a wild Freebooter,
Who here, upon the borders of the Tweed,

Doth prey alike on two distracted Coun-
tries,

Traitor to both.
Idon. Oh, could you hear his voice!

I will not call on Heaven to vouch for me,
But let this kiss speak what is in my heart.

Enter a Peasant.

Pea. Good morrow, Strangers! If you
want a Guide,

Let me have leave to serve you!

Idon. My Companion
Hath need of rest; the sight of Hut or

Hostel
Would be most welcome.

Pea. Yon white hawthorn gained,
You will look down into a dell, and there

Will see an ash from which a sign-board
hangs;

The house is hidden by the shade. Old
Man,

You seem worn out with travel—shall I
support you?

Her. I thank you; but, a resting-place
so near,

'Twere wrong to trouble you.
Pea. God speed you both.

[Exit Peasant.
Her. Idonea, we must part. Be not

alarmed—
'Tis but for a few days—a thought has

struck me.
Idon. That I should leave you at this

house, and thence
Proceed alone. It shall be so; for strength

Would fail you ere our journey's end be
reached.

[Exit HERBERT supported by IDONEA.

Re-enter MARMADUKE and OSWALD.

Mar. This instant will we stop him—

Osw. Be not hasty,

For sometimes, in despite of my con-

viction,

He tempted me to think the Story true;

'Tis plain he loves the Maid, and what he

said
That savoured of aversion to thy name

Appeared the genuine colour of his soul—

Anxiety lest mischief should befall her

After his death.

Mar. I have been much deceived.

Osw. But sure he loves the Maiden, and

never love
Could find delight to nurse itself so

strangely,

Thus to torment her with inventions!—

death—

There must be truth in this.

Mar. Truth in his story!

He must have felt it then, known what it

was,

And in such wise to rack her gentle heart

Had been a tenfold cruelty.

Osw. Strange pleasures

Do we poor mortals cater for ourselves!

To see him thus provoke her tender-

ness

With tales of weakness and infirmity! 245

I'd wager on his life for twenty years.

Mar. We will not waste an hour in

such a cause.

Osw. Why, this is noble! shake her off

at once.

Mar. Her virtues are his instruments.
—A Man
 Who has so practised on the world's cold sense, 250
 May well deceive his Child—What! leave her thus,
 A prey to a deceiver?—no—no—no—
 'Tis but a word and then—
Osw. Something is here
 More than we see, or whence this strong aversion?
Marmaduke! I suspect unworthy tales
 Have reached his ear—you have had enemies. 256
Mar. Enemies!—of his own coinage.
Osw. That may be,
 But wherefore slight protection such as you
 Have power to yield? perhaps he looks elsewhere.—
 I am perplexed.
Mar. What hast thou heard or seen?
Osw. No—no—the thing stands clear of mystery; 261
 (As you have said) he coins himself the slander
 With which he taints her ear;—for a plain reason;
 He dreads the presence of a virtuous man
 Like you; he knows your eye would search his heart, 265
 Your justice stamp upon his evil deeds
 The punishment they merit. All is plain:
 It cannot be—
Mar. What cannot be?
Osw. Yet that a Father
 Should in his love admit no rivalry,
 And torture thus the heart of his own Child— 270
Mar. Nay, you abuse my friendship!
Osw. Heaven forbid!—
 There was a circumstance, trifling indeed—
 It struck me at the time—yet I believe
 I never should have thought of it again
 But for the scene which we by chance have witnessed. 275
Mar. What is your meaning?
Osw. Two days gone I saw,
 Though at a distance and he was disguised,
 Hovering round Herbert's door, a man whose figure
 Resembled much that cold voluptuary,
 The villain, Clifford. He hates you, and he knows 280
 Where he can stab you deepest.
Mar. Clifford never
 Would stoop to skulk about a Cottage door—
 It could not be.
Osw. And yet I now remember
 That, when your praise was warm upon my tongue,

And the blind Man was told how you had rescued 285
 A maiden from the ruffian violence
 Of this same Clifford, he became impatient
 And would not hear me.
Mar. No—it cannot be—
 I dare not trust myself with such a thought—
 Yet whence this strange aversion? You are a man 290
 Not used to rash conjectures—
Osw. If you deem it
 A thing worth further notice, we must act
 With caution, sift the matter artfully.
[Exeunt MARMADUKE and OSWALD.]

SCENE, *The door of the Hostel*
 HERBERT, IDONEA, and Host
Her. [seated]. As I am dear to you, remember, Child!
 This last request.
Idon. You know me, Sir; farewell!
Her. And are you going then? Come, come, Idonea, 296
 We must not part,—I have measured many a league
 When these old limbs had need of rest,—and now
 I will not play the sluggard.
Idon. Nay, sit down.
[Turning to Host.]
 Good Host, such tendance as you would expect 300
 From your own Children, if yourself were sick,
 Let this old Man find at your hands; poor Leader, *[Looking at the dog.]*
 We soon shall meet again. If thou neglect
 This charge of thine, then ill befall thee!
 —Look,
 The little fool is loth to stay behind. 305
 Sir Host! by all the love you bear to courtesy,
 Take care of him, and feed the truant well.
Host. Fear not, I will obey you;—but One so young,
 And One so fair, it goes against my heart
 That you should travel unattended, Lady!—
 I have a palfrey and a groom: the lad 311
 Shall squire you, (would it not be better, Sir?)
 And for less fee than I would let him run
 For any lady I have seen this twelve-month.
Idon. You know, Sir, I have been too long your guard 315
 Not to have learnt to laugh at little fears.
 Why, if a wolf should leap from out a thicket,
 A look of mine would send him scouring back,

THE BORDERS

[ACT I

Unless I differ from the thing I am 319
When you are by my side.

Her. Idonea, wolves
Are not the enemies that move my fears.
Idon. No more, I pray, of this. Three
days at farthest

Will bring me back—protect him, Saints
—farewell! [*Exit IDONEA.*]

Host. 'Tis never drought with us—
St. Cuthbert and his Pilgrims,
Thanks to them, are to us a stream of
comfort: 325

Pity the Maiden did not wait a while;
She could not, Sir, have failed of company.

Her. Now, she is gone, I fain would
call her back.

Host [*calling*]. Holla!
Her. No, no, the business must be
done.—

What means this riotous noise?

Host. The villagers
Are flocking in—a wedding festival— 331
That's all—God save you, Sir.

Enter OSWALD

Osw. Ha! as I live,
The Baron Herbert.

Host. Mercy, the Baron Herbert!

Osw. So far into your journey! on my
life,

You are a lusty Traveller. But how fare
you? 335

Her. Well as the wreck I am permits.
And you, Sir?

Osw. I do not see Idonea.

Her. Dutiful Girl,
She is gone before, to spare my weariness.
But what has brought you hither?

Osw. A slight affair,
That will be soon despatched.

Her. Did Marmaduke 340
Receive that letter?

Osw. Be at peace.—The tie
Is broken, you will hear no more of him.

Her. This is true comfort, thanks a
thousand times!—

That noise!—would I had gone with her
as far

As the Lord Clifford's Castle: I have
heard 345

That, in his milder moods, he has ex-
pressed

Compassion for me. His influence is great
With Henry, our good King;—the Baron
might

Have heard my suit, and urged my plea
at Court.

No matter—he's a dangerous Man.—That
noise!— 350

'Tis too disorderly for sleep or rest.
Idonea would have fears for me,—the
Convent

Will give me quiet lodging. You have
a boy, good Host,

And he must lead me back.

Osw. You are most lucky;
I have been waiting in the wood hard by
For a companion—here he comes; our
journey 356

Enter MARMADUKE

Lies on your way; accept us as your
Guides.

Her. Alas! I creep so slowly.
Osw. Never fear;

We'll not complain of that.
Her. My limbs are stiff

And need repose. Could you but wait
an hour? 360

Osw. Most willingly!—Come, let me
lead you in,

And, while you take your rest, think not
of us;

We'll stroll into the wood; lean on my
arm.

[*Conducts HERBERT into the house.*]

Exit MARMADUKE.

Enter Villagers

Osw. [*to himself coming out of the
Hostel*]. I have prepared a most apt
Instrument—

The Vagrant must, no doubt, be loitering
somewhere 365

About this ground; she hath a tongue
well skilled,

By mingling natural matter of her own
With all the daring fictions I have taught
her,

To win belief, such as my plot requires.
[*Exit OSWALD.*]

*Enter more Villagers, a Musician among
them*

Host [*to them*]. Into the court, my
Friend, and perch yourself 370

Aloft upon the elm-tree. Pretty Maids,
Garlands and flowers, and cakes and
merry thoughts,

Are here, to send the sun into the west
More speedily than you belike would
wish.

*SCENE changes to the Wood adjoining the
Hostel—MARMADUKE and OSWALD
entering*

Mar. I would fain hope that we de-
ceive ourselves: 375

When first I saw him sitting there, alone,
It struck upon my heart I know not how.

Osw. To-day will clear up all.—You
marked a Cottage,

That ragged Dwelling, close beneath a
rock

By the brook-side: it is the abode of One,
A Maiden innocent till ensnared by
Clifford, 381

Who soon grew weary of her; but, alas!

ACT I]

THE BORDERERS

What she had seen and suffered turned
her brain.

Cast off by her Betrayer, she dwells alone,
Nor moves her hands to any needful
work: 385

She eats her food which every day the
peasants

Bring to her hut; and so the Wretch has
lived

Ten years; and no one ever heard her
voice;

But every night at the first stroke of twelve
She quits her house and, in the neigh-
bouring Churchyard 390

Upon the self-same spot, in rain or storm,
She paces out the hour 'twixt twelve and
one—

She paces round and round an Infant's
grave,

And in the Churchyard sod her feet have
worn

A hollow ring; they say it is knee-
deep— 395

Ah! what is here?

[A female Beggar rises up, rubbing her
eyes as if in sleep—a Child in her
arms.

Beg. Oh! Gentlemen, I thank you;
I've had the saddest dream that ever
troubled

The heart of living creature.—My poor
Babe

Was crying, as I thought, crying for bread
When I had none to give him; whereupon

I put a slip of foxglove in his hand, 401
Which pleased him so, that he was hushed
at once:

When into one of those same spotted bells
A bee came darting, which the Child with
joy 404

Imprisoned there, and held it to his ear,
And suddenly grew black, as he would die.

Mar. We have no time for this, my
babbling Gossip;

Here's what will comfort you.

[Gives her money.
Beg. The Saints reward you

For this good deed!—Well, Sirs, this
passed away; 409

And afterwards I fancied, a strange dog,
Trotting alone along the beaten road,

Came to my child as by my side he slept,
And, fondling, licked his face, then on a
sudden

Snapped fierce to make a morsel of his
head:

But here he is, [kissing the Child] it must
have been a dream. 415

Osw. When next inclined to sleep, take
my advice

And put your head, good Woman, under
cover.

Beg. Oh, Sir, you would not talk thus,
if you knew

What life is this of ours, how sleep will
master

The weary-worn.—You gentlefolk have
got 420

Warm chambers to your wish. I'd rather
be

A stone than what I am.—But two nights
gone,

The darkness overtook me—wind and rain
Beat hard upon my head—and yet I saw

A glow-worm, through the covert of the
furze, 425

Shine calmly as if nothing ailed the sky:
At which I half accused the God in
Heaven.—

You must forgive me.

Osw. Ay, and if you think
The Fairies are to blame, and you should
chide

Your favourite saint—no matter—this
good day 430

Has made amends.

Beg. Thanks to you both; but,
Oh Sir!

How would you like to travel on whole
hours

As I have done, my eyes upon the ground,
Expecting still, I knew not how, to find

A piece of money glittering through the
dust? 435

Mar. This woman is a prater. Pray,
good Lady!

Do you tell fortunes?

Beg. Oh Sir, you are like the rest.
This Little-one—it cuts me to the heart—

Well! they might turn a beggar from
their doors,

But there are Mothers who can see the
Babe 440

Here at my breast, and ask me where I
bought it:

This they can do, and look upon my face—
But you, Sir, should be kinder.

Mar. Come hither, Fathers,
And learn what nature is from this poor
Wretch!

Beg. Ay, Sir, there's nobody that feels
for us. 445

Why now—but yesterday I overtook
A blind old Greybeard and accosted him,

I' th' name of all the Saints, and by the
Mass

He should have used me better!—Charity!
If you can melt a rock, he is your man;

But I'll be even with him—here again 451
Have I been waiting for him.

Osw. Well, but softly,
Who is it that hath wronged you?

Beg. Mark you me;
I'll point him out;—a Maiden is his guide,
Lovely as Spring's first rose; a little dog,

Tied by a woollen cord, moves on before
With look as sad as he were dumb; the
cur, 457

THE BOMBERERS

(ACT I)

I owe him no ill will, but in good sooth
He does his Master credit.

Mar. As I live,
'Tis Herbert and no other!

Beg. 'Tis a feast to see him,
Lank as a ghost and tall, his shoulders
bent, 461

And long beard white with age—yet ever-
more,

As if he were the only Saint on earth,
He turns his face to Heaven.

Osw. But why so violent
Against this venerable Man?

Beg. I'll tell you: 465
He has the very hardest heart on earth;
I had as lief turn to the Friar's school
And knock for entrance, in mid holiday.

Mar. But to your story.

Beg. I was saying, Sir—
Well—he has often spurned me like a
toad, 470

But yesterday was worse than all; at last
I overtook him, Sirs, my Babe and I,
And begged a little aid for charity:

But he was snappish as a cottage cur.
Well then, says I—I'll out with it; at
which 475

I cast a look upon the Girl, and felt
As if my heart would burst; and so I left
him.

Osw. I think, good Woman, you are the
very person

Whom, but some few days past, I saw in
Eskdale, 479

At Herbert's door.

Beg. Ay; and if truth were known
I have good business there.

Osw. I met you at the threshold,
And he seemed angry.

Beg. Angry! well he might;
And long as I can stir I'll dog him.—
Yesterday,

To serve me so, and knowing that he owes
The best of all he has to me and mine. 485

But 'tis all over now. That good old Lady
Has left a power of riches; and I say it,
If there's a lawyer in the land, the knave
Shall give me half.

Osw. What's this?—I fear, good
Woman,

You have been insolent.

Beg. And there's the Baron,
I spied him skulking in his peasant's
dress. 491

Osw. How say you? in disguise?—
Mar. But what's your business
With Herbert or his Daughter?

Beg. Daughter! truly—
But how's the day?—I fear, my little
Boy,

We've overslept ourselves.—Sirs, have
you seen him? [*Offers to go.*]

Mar. I must have more of this;—you
shall not stir 496

An inch, till I am answered. Know you
aught

That doth concern this Herbert?

Beg. You are provoked,
And will misuse me, Sir!

Mar. No trifling, Woman!—

Osw. You are as safe as in a sanctuary;
Speak. 501

Mar. Speak!

Beg. He is a most hard-hearted Man.

Mar. Your life is at my mercy.

Beg. Do not harm me,
And I will tell you all!—You know not,

Sir,
What strong temptations press upon the
Poor.

Osw. Speak out.

Beg. Oh, Sir, I've been a wicked
Woman. 505

Osw. Nay, but speak out!

Beg. He flattered me, and said
What harvest it would bring us both;

and so

I parted with the Child.

Mar. Parted with whom?

Beg. Idonea, as he calls her; but the Girl
Is mine.

Mar. Yours, Woman! are you Her-
bert's wife? 510

Beg. Wife, Sir! his wife—not I; my
husband, Sir,

Was of Kirkoswald—many a snowy
winter

We've weathered out together. My poor
Gilfred!

He has been two years in his grave.

Mar. Enough.

Osw. We've solved the riddle—Mis-
creant!

Mar. Do you, 515
Good Dame, repair to Liddesdale and
wait

For my return; be sure you shall have
justice.

Osw. A lucky woman!—go, you have
done good service. [*Aside.*]

Mar. [*to herself*]. Eternal praises on
the power that saved her!— 519

Osw. [*gives her money*]. Here's for your
little boy, and when you christen him

I'll be his Godfather.

Beg. Oh Sir, you are merry with me.
In grange or farm this Hundred scarcely
owns

A dog that does not know me.—These
good Folks,—

For love of God I must not pass their
doors;

But I'll be back with my best speed: for
you— 525

God bless and thank you both, my gentle
Masters. [*Exit Beggar.*]

Mar. [*to herself*]. The cruel Viper!—
Poor devoted Maid,

ACT II

Now I do love thee.

Osw. I am thunderstruck.

Mar. Where is she—holla!

[Calling to the Beggar, who returns;
he looks at her stedfastly.]

You are Idonea's Mother?—

Nay, be not terrified—it does me good 530
To look upon you.

Osw. [interrupting]. In a peasant's dress
You saw, who was it?

Beg. Nay, I dare not speak;
He is a man, if it should come to his ears
I never shall be heard of more.

Osw. Lord Clifford?

Beg. What can I do? believe me, gentle

Sirs, 535

I love her, though I dare not call her
daughter.

Osw. Lord Clifford—did you see him
talk with Herbert?

Beg. Yes, to my sorrow—under the
great oak

At Herbert's door—and when he stood
beside

The blind Man—at the silent Girl he
looked 540

With such a look—it makes me tremble,
Sir,

To think of it.

Osw. Enough! you may depart.

Mar. [to himself]. Father!—to God
himself we cannot give 543

A holier name; and, under such a mask,
To lead a Spirit, spotless as the blessed,

To that abhorred den of brutish vice!—
Oswald, the firm foundation of my life

Is going from under me; these strange
discoveries—

Looked at from every point of fear or
hope,

Duty, or love—involve, I feel, my ruin. 550

ACT II

SCENE, A Chamber in the Hostel—OSWALD
alone, rising from a Table on which he
had been writing

Osw. They chose him for their Chief!—
what covert part

He in the preference, modest Youth,
might take,

I neither know nor care. The insult bred
More of contempt than hatred; both are

flown;

That either e'er existed is my shame: 555
'Twas a dull spark—a most unnatural fire

That died the moment the air breathed
upon it.

—These fools of feeling are mere birds of
winter

That haunt some barren island of the
north,

Where, if a famishing man stretch forth
his hand, 560

THE BORDERERS

They think it is to feed them. I have left
him

To solitary meditation;—now
For a few swelling phrases, and a flash

Of truth, enough to dazzle and to blind,
And he is mine for ever—here he comes.

Enter MARMADUKE

Mar. These ten years she has moved
her lips all day 566

And never speaks!

Osw. Who is it?

Mar. I have seen her.

Osw. Oh! the poor tenant of that
ragged homestead,

Her whom the Monster, Clifford, drove to
madness.

Mar. I met a peasant near the spot; he
told me, 570

These ten years she had sate all day alone
Within those empty walls.

Osw. I too have seen her;

Chancing to pass this way some six
months gone,

At midnight, I betook me to the Church-
yard:

The moon shone clear, the air was still,
so still 575

The trees were silent as the graves beneath
them.

Long did I watch, and saw her pacing
round

Upon the self-same spot, still round and
round,

Her lips for ever moving.

Mar. At her door

Rooted I stood; for, looking at the
woman, 580

I thought I saw the skeleton of Idonea.

Osw. But the pretended Father—

Mar. Earthly law

Measures not crimes like his.
Osw. We rank not, happily,

With those who take the spirit of their
rule

From that soft class of devotees who feel
Reverence for life so deeply, that they

spare 586

The verminous brood, and cherish what
they spare

While feeding on their bodies. Would
that Idonea

Were present, to the end that we might
hear

What she can urge in his defence; she
loves him. 590

Mar. Yes, loves him; 'tis a truth that

multiplies

His guilt a thousand-fold.
Osw. 'Tis most perplexing:

What must be done?
Mar. We will conduct her hither;

These walls shall witness it—from first to

last

He shall reveal himself.

Osw. Happy are we, 595
Who live in these disputed tracts, that own
No law but what each man makes for
himself;

Here justice has indeed a field of triumph.

Mar. Let us begone and bring her
hither;—here

The truth shall be laid open, his guilt
proved 600

Before her face. The rest be left to me.

Osw. You will be firm: but though we
well may trust

The issue to the justice of the cause,
Caution must not be flung aside; re-
member,

Yours is no common life. Self-stationed
here, 605

Upon these savage confines, we have seen
you

Stand like an isthmus 'twixt two stormy
seas

That oft have checked their fury at your
bidding.

'Mid the deep holds of Solway's mossy
waste,

Your single virtue has transformed a
Band 610

Of fierce barbarians into Ministers
Of peace and order. Aged men with tears

Have blessed their steps, the fatherless
retire 613

For shelter to their banners. But it is,
As you must needs have deeply felt, it is

In darkness and in tempest that we seek
The majesty of Him who rules the world.

Benevolence, that has not heart to use 618

The wholesome ministry of pain and evil,
Becomes at last weak and contemptible.

Your generous qualities have won due
praise, 621

But vigorous Spirits look for something
more

Than Youth's spontaneous products; and
to-day

You will not disappoint them; and here-
after—

Mar. You are wasting words; hear me
then once for all: 625

You are a Man—and therefore, if com-
passion,

Which to our kind is natural as life,
Be known unto you, you will love this

Woman,
Even as I do; but I should loathe the

light,
If I could think one weak or partial

feeling— 630

Osw. You will forgive me—
Mar. If I ever knew

My heart, could penetrate its inmost core,
'Tis at this moment.—Oswald, I have loved

To be the friend and father of the op-
pressed,

A comforter of sorrow;—there is some-
thing 635

Which looks like a transition in my soul,
And yet it is not.—Let us lead him

hither.
Osw. Stoop for a moment; 'tis an act
of justice;

And where's the triumph if the delegate
Must fall in the execution of his office? 640

The deed is done—if you will have it so—
Here where we stand—that tribe of vulgar

wretches
(You saw them gathering for the festival)
Rush in—the villains seize us—

Mar. Seize!
Osw. Yes, they—

Men who are little given to sift and
weigh— 645

Would wreak on us the passion of the
moment.

Mar. The cloud will soon disperse—
farewell—but stay,

Thou wilt relate the story.

Osw. Am I neither
To bear a part in this Man's punishment,

Nor be its witness?

Mar. I had many hopes 650
That were most dear to me, and some

will bear
To be transferred to thee.

Osw. When I'm dishonoured!
Mar. I would preserve thee. How may

this be done?

Osw. By showing that you look beyond
the instant.

A few leagues hence we shall have open
ground, 655

And nowhere upon earth is place so fit
To look upon the deed. Before we enter

The barren Moor, hangs from a beetling
rock

The shattered Castle in which Clifford oft
Has held infernal orgies—with the gloom,

And very superstition of the place, 661

Seasoning his wickedness. The Debauchee
Would there perhaps have gathered the

first fruits
Of this mock Father's guilt.

Enter Host conducting HERBERT
Host. The Baron Herbert

Attends your pleasure.

Osw. [to Host]. We are ready—
[to HERBERT] Sir! 665

I hope you are refreshed.—I have just
written

A notice for your Daughter, that she may
know

What is become of you.—You'll sit down
and sign it;

'Twill glad her heart to see her father's
signature.

[Gives the letter he had written.
Her. Thanks for your care,

[Sits down and writes. Exit Host.
Osw. *[aside to MARMADUKE]*. Perhaps
it would be useful 670
That you too should subscribe your name.
[MARMADUKE overlooks HERBERT—then
writes—examines the letter eagerly.
Mar. I cannot leave this paper.

[He puts it up, agitated.
Osw. *[aside]*. Dastard! Come.
[MARMADUKE goes towards HERBERT
and supports him—MARMADUKE
tremblingly beckons OSWALD to take
his place.

Mar. *[as he quits HERBERT]*. There is a
palsy in his limbs—he shakes.

[Exeunt OSWALD and HERBERT—MAR-
MADUKE following.

SCENE changes to a Wood—a Group of
Pilgrims and IDONEA with them

First Pil. A grove of darker and more
lofty shade

I never saw.

Sec. Pil. The music of the birds 675
Drops deepened from a roof so thick with
leaves.

Old Pil. This news! it made my heart
leap up with joy.

Idon. I scarcely can believe it.

Old Pil. Myself, I heard
The Sheriff read, in open Court, a letter
Which purported it was the royal pleasure
The Baron Herbert, who, as was supposed,
Had taken refuge in this neighbourhood,
Should be forthwith restored. The hear-
ing, Lady,

Filled my dim eyes with tears.—When
I returned

From Palestine, and brought with me a
heart, 685

Though rich in heavenly, poor in earthly,
comfort,

I met your Father, then a wandering
Outcast:

He had a Guide, a Shepherd's boy; but
grieved

He was that One so young should pass
his youth

In such sad service; and he parted with
him. 690

We joined our tales of wretchedness
together,

And begged our daily bread from door
to door.

I talk familiarly to you, sweet Lady!
For once you loved me.

Idon. You shall back with me
And see your Friend again. The good old
Man 695

Will be rejoiced to greet you.

Old Pil. It seems but yesterday
That a fierce storm o'ertook us, worn with
travel,

In a deep wood remote from any town.

A cave that opened to the road presented
A friendly shelter, and we entered in. 700
Idon. And I was with you?

Old Pil. If indeed 'twas you—
But you were then a tottering Little-one—
We sate us down. The sky grew dark and
darker:

I struck my flint, and built up a small fire
With rotten boughs and leaves, such as
the winds 705

Of many autumns in the cave had piled.
Meanwhile the storm fell heavy on the
woods;

Our little fire sent forth a cheering
warmth

And we were comforted, and talked of
comfort;

But 'twas an angry night, and o'er our
heads 710

The thunder rolled in peals that would
have made

A sleeping man uneasy in his bed.
O Lady, you have need to love your
Father.

His voice—methinks I hear it now, his
voice

When, after a broad flash that filled the
cave, 715

He said to me, that he had seen his Child,
A face (no cherub's face more beautiful)

Revealed by lustre brought with it from
heaven;

And it was you, dear Lady!

Idon. God be praised,
That I have been his comforter till now!

And will be so through every change of
fortune 721

And every sacrifice his peace requires.—
Let us begone with speed, that he may hear

These joyful tidings from no lips but
mine. 724

[Exeunt IDONEA and Pilgrims.

SCENE, The Area of a half-ruined Castle—
on one side the entrance to a dungeon—

OSWALD and MARMADUKE pacing back-
wards and forwards

Mar. 'Tis a wild night.

Osw. I'd give my cloak and bonnet
For sight of a warm fire.

Mar. The wind blows keen;
My hands are numb.

Osw. Ha! ha! 'tis nipping cold.
[Blowing his fingers.

I long for news of our brave Comrades;
Lacy

Would drive those Scottish Rovers to
their dens

If once they blew a horn this side the
Tweed. 730

Mar. I think I see a second range of
Towers;

This castle has another Area—come,
Let us examine it.

THE BORDERERS

[ACT II

Osw. 'Tis a bitter night;
I hope Idonea is well housed. That
horseman,
Who at full speed swept by us where the
wood
Roared in the tempest, was within an ace
Of sending to his grave our precious
Charge:

That would have been a vile mischance.

Mar. It would.

Osw. Justice had been most cruelly
defrauded.

Mar. Most cruelly.

Osw. As up the steep we clomb,
I saw a distant fire in the north-east; 741
I took it for the blaze of Cheviot Beacon:
With proper speed our quarters may be
gained

To-morrow evening.

[Looks restlessly towards the mouth of
the dungeon.

Mar. When, upon the plank,
I had led him 'cross the torrent, his voice
blessed me: 745

You could not hear, for the foam beat the
rocks

With deafening noise,—the benediction fell
Back on himself; but changed into a curse.

Osw. As well indeed it might.

Mar. And this you deem
The fittest place?

Osw. [aside]. He is growing pitiful. 750

Mar. [listening]. What an odd moaning
that is!—

Osw. Mighty odd
The wind should pipe a little, while we
stand

Cooling our heels in this way!—I'll begin
And count the stars.

Mar. [still listening]. That dog of his,
you are sure,

Could not come after us—he *must* have
perished; 755

The torrent would have dashed an oak to
splinters.

You said you did not like his looks—
that he

Would trouble us; if he were here again,
I swear the sight of him would quail me
more

Than twenty armies.

Osw. How?

Mar. The old blind Man,
When you had told him the mischance,
was troubled 761

Even to the shedding of some natural tears
Into the torrent over which he hung,
Listening in vain.

Osw. He has a tender heart!

[OSWALD offers to go down into the
dungeon.

Mar. How now, what mean you?

Osw. Truly, I was going
To waken our stray Baron. Were there not

A farm or dwelling-house within five
leagues, 767

We should deserve to wear a cap and bells,
Three good round years, for playing the
fool here

In such a night as this.

Mar. Stop, stop.

Osw. Perhaps, 770

You'd better like we should descend
together,

And lie down by his side—what say you
to it?

Three of us—we should keep each other
warm:

I'll answer for it that our four-legged
friend

Shall not disturb us; further I'll not
engage; 775

Come, come, for manhood's sake!

Mar. These drowsy shiverings,
This mortal stupor which is creeping over
me,

What do they mean? were this my single
body

Opposed to armies, not a nerve would
tremble:

Why do I tremble now?—Is not the
depth 780

Of this Man's crimes beyond the reach of
thought?

And yet, in plumbing the abyss for
judgment,

Something I strike upon which turns my
mind

Back on herself, I think, again—my
breast 784

Concentrates all the terrors of the Universe:
I look at him and tremble like a child.

Osw. Is it possible?

Mar. One thing you noticed not:
Just as we left the glen a clap of thunder

Burst on the mountains with hell-rousing
force.

This is a time, said he, when guilt may
shudder; 790

But there's a Providence for them who
walk

In helplessness, when innocence is with
them.

At this audacious blasphemy, I thought
The spirit of vengeance seemed to ride
the air.

Osw. Why are you not the man you
were that moment? 795

[He draws MARMADUKE to the dungeon.

Mar. You say he was asleep,—look at
this arm,

And tell me if 'tis fit for such a work.
Oswald, Oswald! [Leans upon OSWALD.

Osw. This is some sudden seizure!

Mar. A most strange faintness,—will
you hunt me out

A draught of water?

Osw. Nay, to see you thus 800

Moves me beyond my bearing.—I will try
To gain the torrent's brink. [*Exit OSWALD.*]

Mar. [*after a pause*]. It seems an age
Since that Man left me.—No, I am not
lost.

Her. [*at the mouth of the dungeon*]. Give
me your hand; where are you,
Friends? and tell me

How goes the night.

Mar. 'Tis hard to measure time
In such a weary night, and such a place.

Her. I do not hear the voice of my friend
Oswald.

Mar. A minute past, he went to fetch
a draught

Of water from the torrent. 'Tis, you'll say,
A cheerless beverage.

Her. How good it was in you
To stay behind!—Hearing at first no
answer,

I was alarmed.

Mar. No wonder; this is a place
That well may put some fears into *your*
heart.

Her. Why so? a roofless rock had been
a comfort,

Storm-beaten and bewildered as we were;
And in a night like this to lend your
cloaks

To make a bed for me!—My Girl will weep
When she is told of it.

Mar. This Daughter of yours
Is very dear to you.

Her. Oh! but you are young;
Over your head twice twenty years must
roll,

With all their natural weight of sorrow
and pain,

Ere can be known to you how much a
Father

May love his Child.

Mar. Thank you, old Man, for this!
[*Aside.*]

Her. Fallen am I, and worn out, a use-
less Man;

Kindly have you protected me to-night,
And no return have I to make but prayers;
May you in age be blest with such a
daughter!

When from the Holy Land I had returned
Sightless, and from my heritage was
driven,

A wretched Outcast—but this strain of
thought

Would lead me to talk fondly.

Mar. Do not fear;
Your words are precious to my ears; go on.

Her. You will forgive me, but my heart
runs over.

When my old Leader slipped into the
flood

And perished, what a piercing outcry you
Sent after him. I have loved you ever
since.

You start—where are we?

Mar. Oh, there is no danger;
The cold blast struck me.

Her. 'Twas a foolish question.
Mar. But when you were an Outcast?—
Heaven is just;

Your piety would not miss its due re-
ward;

The little Orphan then would be your
succour,

And do good service, though she knew it
not.

Her. I turned me from the dwellings
of my Fathers,

Where none but those who trampled on
my rights

Seemed to remember me. To the wide
world

I bore her in my arms; her looks won
pity;

She was my Raven in the wilderness,
And brought me food. Have I not cause
to love her?

Mar. Yes.

Her. More than ever Parent
loved a Child?

Mar. Yes, yes.

Her. I will not murmur, merciful God!
I will not murmur; blasted as I have been,

Thou hast left me ears to hear my Daugh-
ter's voice,

And arms to fold her to my heart. Sub-
missively

Thee I adore, and find my rest in faith.

Enter OSWALD

Osw. Herbert!—confusion! [*aside*].
Here it is, my Friend, [*Presents the*
Horn.]

A charming beverage for you to carouse
This bitter night.

Her. Ha! Oswald! ten bright crosses
I would have given, not many minutes
gone,

To have heard your voice.

Osw. Your couch, I fear, good Baron,
Has been but comfortless; and yet that
place,

When the tempestuous wind first drove
us hither,

Felt warm as a wren's nest. You'd better
turn

And under covert rest till break of day,
Or till the storm abate.

[*To MARMADUKE aside.*] He has restored
you,

No doubt you have been nobly enter-
tained?

But soft!—how came he forth? The Night-
mare Conscience

Has driven him out of harbour?

Mar. I believe
You have guessed right.

Her. The trees renew their murmur:

THE BORDERERS

[ACT II]

Come, let us house together.

[OSWALD conducts him to the dungeon.

Osw. [returns]. Had I not
Esteemed you worthy to conduct the af-
fair 870

To its most fit conclusion, do you think
I would so long have struggled with my
Nature,
And smothered all that's man in me?—
away!—

[Looking towards the dungeon.
This man's the property of him who best
Can feel his crimes. I have resigned a
privilege; 875

It now becomes my duty to resume it.

Mar. Touch not a finger—

Osw. What then must be done?

Mar. Which way soe'er I turn, I am
perplexed.

Osw. Now, on my life, I grieve for you.
The misery

Of doubt is insupportable. Pity, the facts
Did not admit of stronger evidence; 881
Twelve honest men, plain men, would set
us right;

Their verdict would abolish these weak
scruples.

Mar. Weak! I am weak—there does
my torment lie,

Feeding itself.

Osw. Verily, when he said 885
How his old heart would leap to hear her
steps,

You thought his voice the echo of Idonea's.
Mar. And never heard a sound so ter-
rible.

Osw. Perchance you think so now?

Mar. I cannot do it:

Twice did I spring to grasp his withered
throat, 890

When such a sudden weakness fell upon me,
I could have dropped asleep upon his
breast.

Osw. Justice—is there not thunder in
the word?

Shall it be law to stab the petty robber
Who aims but at our purse; and shall this

Parricide— 895

Worse is he far, far worse (if foul dis-
honour

Be worse than death) to that confiding
Creature

Whom he to more than filial love and duty
Hath falsely trained—shall he fulfil his

purpose?

But you are fallen.

Mar. Fallen should I be indeed—900

Murder—perhaps asleep, blind, old, alone,
Betrayed, in darkness! Here to strike the
blow—

Away! away!—[Flings away his sword.

Osw. Nay, I have done with you:

We'll lead him to the Convent. He shall
live,

And she shall love him. With unquestion-
ed title 905

He shall be seated in his Barony,
And we too chant the praise of his good

deeds.

I now perceive we do mistake our masters,
And most despise the men who best can

teach us:

Henceforth it shall be said that bad men
only 910

Are brave: Clifford is brave; and that old
Man

Is brave.

[Taking MARMADUKE'S sword and
giving it to him.

To Clifford's arms he would have led
His Victim—haply to this desolate house.

Mar. [advancing to the dungeon]. It
must be ended!—

Osw. Softly; do not rouse him;
He will deny it to the last. He lies 915

Within the Vault, a spear's length to the
left.

[MARMADUKE descends to the dungeon.
[Alone]. The Villains rose in mutiny to

destroy me;

I could have quelled the Cowards, but this
Stripling

Must needs step in, and save my life. The
look

With which he gave the boon—I see it
now! 920

The same that tempted me to loathe the
gift.—

For this old venerable Grey-beard—faith
'Tis his own fault if he hath got a face

Which doth play tricks with them that
look on it:

'Twas this that put it in my thoughts—
that countenance— 925

His staff—his figure—Murder!—what, of
whom?

We kill a worn-out horse, and who but
women

Sigh at the deed? Hew down a withered tree,
And none look grave but dotards. He

may live

To thank me for this service. Rainbow
arches, 930

Highways of dreaming passion, have too
long,

Young as he is, diverted wish and hope
From the unpretending ground we mortals

tread;—

Then shatter the delusion, break it up
And set him free. What follows? I have

learned 935

That things will work to ends the slaves
o' the world

Do never dream of. I have been what he—
This Boy—when he comes forth with

bloody hands—

Might envy, and am now,—but he shall
know

What I am now—

[*Goes and listens at the dungeon. Praying or parleying?—tut!* 940
Is he not eyeless? He has been half-dead
These fifteen years—

Enter female Beggar with two or three of her Companions

[*Turning abruptly*]. Ha! speak—what
Thing art thou?

[*Recognises her*]. Heavens! my good
Friend! [To her
Beg. Forgive me, gracious Sir!—

Osw. [*to her companions*]. Begone, ye
Slaves, or I will raise a whirlwind
And send ye dancing to the clouds, like
leaves. [*They retire affrighted*.

Beg. Indeed we meant no harm; we
lodge sometimes 946

In this deserted Castle—I repent me.

[OSWALD goes to the dungeon—listens
—returns to the Beggar.

Osw. Woman, thou hast a helpless In-
fant—keep

Thy secret for its sake, or verily
That wretched life of thine shall be the
forfeit. 950

Beg. I do repent me, Sir; I fear the curse
Of that blind Man. 'Twas not your mo-
ney, Sir,—

Osw. Begone!

Beg. [*going*]. There is some wicked
deed in hand: [Aside.

Would I could find the old Man and his
Daughter. [Exit Beggar.

MARMADUKE re-enters from the dungeon

Osw. It is all over then;—your foolish
fears 955

Are hushed to sleep, by your own act and
deed,

Made quiet as he is.

Mar. Why came you down?
And when I felt your hand upon my
arm

And spake to you, why did you give no
answer?

Feared you to waken him? he must have
been 960

In a deep sleep. I whispered to him thrice.
There are the strangest echoes in that
place!

Osw. Tut! let them gabble till the day
of doom.

Mar. Scarcely, by groping, had I reach-
ed the Spot,

When round my wrist I felt a cord drawn
tight, 965

As if the blind Man's dog were pulling
at it.

Osw. But after that?

Mar. The features of Idonea
Lurked in his face—

Osw. Pshaw! Never to these eyes
Will retribution show itself again 969

With aspect so inviting. Why forbid me
To share your triumph?

Mar. Yes, her very look,
Smiling in sleep—

Osw. A pretty feat of Fancy!
Mar. Though but a glimpse, it sent me
to my prayers.

Osw. Is he alive?

Mar. What mean you? who alive?

Osw. Herbert! since you will have it,
Baron Herbert; 975

He who will gain his Seignory when
Idonea

Hath become Clifford's harlot—is he liv-
ing?

Mar. The old Man in that dungeon is
alive.

Osw. Henceforth, then, will I never in
camp or field

Obeys you more. Your weakness, to the
Band, 980

Shall be proclaimed: brave Men, they all
shall hear it.

You a protector of humanity!
Avenger you of outraged innocence!

Mar. 'Twas dark—dark as the grave;
yet did I see,

Saw him—his face turned toward me; and
I tell thee 985

Idonea's filial countenance was there
To baffle me—it put me to my prayers.

Upwards I cast my eyes, and, through a
crevice,

Beheld a star twinkling above my head,
And, by the living God, I could not do it.

[Sinks exhausted.
Osw. [*to himself*]. Now may I perish if
this turn do more 991

Than make me change my course.
[To MARMADUKE]. Dear Marmaduke,

My words were rashly spoken; I recall
them:

I feel my error; shedding human blood
Is a most serious thing.

Mar. Not I alone, 995
Thou too art deep in guilt.

Osw. We have indeed
Been most presumptuous. There is guilt
in this,

Else could so strong a mind have ever
known

These trepidations? Plain it is that Hea-
ven

Has marked out this foul Wretch as one
whose crimes 1000

Must never come before a mortal judg-
ment-seat,

Or be chastised by mortal instruments.
Mar. A thought that's worth a thou-
sand worlds!

[Goes towards the dungeon.
Osw. I grieve

THE BORDERERS

[ACT II

That, in my zeal, I have caused you so much pain.

Mar. Think not of that! 'tis over—we are safe. 1005

Osw. [as if to himself, yet speaking aloud]. The truth is hideous, but how stifle it?

[Turning to MARMADUKE. Give me your sword—nay, here are stones and fragments,

The least of which would beat out a man's brains;

Or you might drive your head against that wall. 1009

No! this is not the place to hear the tale: It should be told you pinioned in your bed,

Or on some vast and solitary plain Blown to you from a trumpet.

Mar. Why talk thus?

Whate'er the monster brooding in your breast

I care not: fear I have none, and cannot fear— 1015

[The sound of a horn is heard. That horn again—'Tis some one of our Troop;

What do they here? Listen!

Osw. What; dogged like thieves!

Enter WALLACE and LACY, &c.

Lacy. You are found at last, thanks to the vagrant Troop

For not misleading us.

Osw. [looking at WALLACE]. That subtle Grey-beard— 1019

I'd rather see my father's ghost.

Lacy [to MARMADUKE]. My Captain, We come by order of the Band. Belike You have not heard that Henry has at last Dissolved the Barons' League, and sent abroad

His Sheriffs with fit force to reinstate The genuine owners of such Lands and Baronies 1025

As, in these long commotions, have been seized.

His Power is this way tending. It befits us

To stand upon our guard, and with our swords

Defend the innocent.

Mar. Lacy! we look 1029

But at the surfaces of things; we hear Of towns in flames, fields ravaged, young and old

Driven out in troops to want and nakedness;

Then grasp our swords and rush upon a cure

That flatters us, because it asks not thought:

The deeper malady is better hid; 1035

The world is poisoned at the heart.

Lacy. What mean you?

Wal. [whose eye has been fixed suspiciously upon OSWALD]. Ay, what is it you mean?

Mar. Harkee, my Friends;— [Appearing gay.

Were there a Man who, being weak and helpless

And most forlorn, should bribe a Mother, pressed 1039

By penury, to yield him up her Daughter, A little Infant, and instruct the Babe,

Prattling upon his knee, to call him Father—

Lacy. Why, if his heart be tender, that offence

I could forgive him.

Mar. [going on]. And should he make the Child

An instrument of falsehood, should he teach her 1045

To stretch her arms, and dim the glad some light

Of infant playfulness with piteous looks Of misery that was not—

Lacy. Troth, 'tis hard— But in a world like ours—

Mar. [changing his tone]. This self-same Man—

Even while he printed kisses on the cheek Of this poor Babe, and taught its innocent tongue 1051

To lisp the name of Father—could he look To the unnatural harvest of that time

When he should give her up, a Woman grown, 1054

To him who bid the highest in the market Of foul pollution—

Lacy. The whole visible world Contains not such a Monster!

Mar. For this purpose Should he resolve to taint her Soul by means

Which bathe the limbs in sweat to think of them;

Should he, by tales which would draw tears from iron, 1060

Work on her nature, and so turn compassion

And gratitude to ministers of vice, And make the spotless spirit of filial love

Prime mover in a plot to damn his Victim Both soul and body—

Wal. 'Tis too horrible; 1065

Oswald, what say you to it?

Lacy. Hew him down, And fling him to the ravens.

Mar. But his aspect, It is so meek, his countenance so venerable.

Wal. [with an appearance of mistrust]. But how, what say you, Oswald?

Lacy [at the same moment]. Stab him, were it

Before the Altar.

ACT III]

THE BORDERERS

Mar. What, if he were sick, 1070
Tottering upon the very verge of life,
And old, and blind—

Lacy. Blind, say you?

Osw. [coming forward]. Are we Men,
Or own we baby Spirits? Genuine courage
Is not an accidental quality,
A thing dependent for its casual birth
On opposition and impediment. 1076
Wisdom, if Justice speak the word, beats
down

The giant's strength; and, at the voice of
Justice,

Spares not the worm. The giant and the
worm—

She weighs them in one scale. The wiles
of woman, 1080

And craft of age, seducing reason, first
Made weakness a protection, and obscured
The moral shapes of things. His tender
cries

And helpless innocence—do they protect
The infant lamb? and shall the infirmities,
1085

Which have enabled this enormous Culprit
To perpetrate his crimes, serve as a Sanctu-
ary

To cover him from punishment? Shame!—
Justice,

Admitting no resistance, bends alike
The feeble and the strong. She needs not
here 1090

Her bonds and chains, which make the
mighty feeble.

—We recognise in this old Man a victim
Prepared already for the sacrifice.

Lacy. By heaven, his words are reason!

Osw. Yes, my Friends,
His countenance is meek and vener-
able; 1095

And, by the Mass, to see him at his
prayers!—

I am of flesh and blood, and may I perish
When my heart does not ache to think
of it!—

Poor Victim! not a virtue under heaven
But what was made an engine to ensnare
thee; 1100

But yet I trust, Idonea, thou art safe.

Lacy. Idonea!

Wal. How! what? your Idonea?
[To MARMADUKE.

Mar. Mine;
But now no longer mine. You know
Lord Clifford;

He is the Man to whom the Maiden—pure
As beautiful, and gentle and benign, 1105
And in her ample heart loving even me—
Was to be yielded up.

Lacy. Now, by the head
Of my own child, this Man must die; my
hand,

A worthier wanting, shall itself entwine
In his grey hairs!—

Mar. [to LACY. I love the Father in
thee. 1110

You know me, Friends; I have a heart
to feel,

And I have felt, more than perhaps be-
comes me

Or duty sanctions.

Lacy. We will have ample justice.
Who are we, Friends? Do we not live on
ground

Where Souls are self-defended, free to
grow 1115

Like mountain oaks rocked by the stormy
wind.

Mark the Almighty Wisdom, which de-
creed

This monstrous crime to be laid open—
here,

Where Reason has an eye that she can
use,

And Men alone are Umpires. To the
Camp 1120

He shall be led, and there, the Country
round

All gathered to the spot, in open day

Shall Nature be avenged.

Osw. 'Tis nobly thought;
His death will be a monument for ages.

Mar. [to LACY. I thank you for that
hint. He shall be brought 1125

Before the Camp, and would that best
and wisest

Of every country might be present. There
His crime shall be proclaimed; and for
the rest

It shall be done as Wisdom shall decide;
Meanwhile, do you two hasten back and
see 1130

That all is well prepared.

Wal. We will obey you.

[Aside]. But softly! we must look a little
nearer.

Mar. Tell where you found us. At
some future time

I will explain the cause. [Exeunt.

ACT III

SCENE, *The door of the Hostel, a group of
Pilgrims as before; IDONEA and the
Host among them*

Host. Lady, you'll find your Father at
the Convent 1135

As I have told you: He left us yesterday
With two Companions; one of them, as

seemed,
His most familiar Friend. [Going.] There
was a letter

Of which I heard them speak, but that I
fancy

Has been forgotten.

Idon. [to Host]. Farewell!

Host. Gentle pilgrims,

THE BOWDERERS

[ACT IN

St. Cuthbert speed you on your holy errand. 1141

[Exeunt IDONEA and Pilgrims.]

SCENE. *A desolate Moor*
OSWALD [alone]

Osw. Carry him to the Camp! Yes, to the Camp.

Oh, Wisdom! a most wise resolve! and then,

That half a word should blow it to the winds!

This last device must end my work.—Methinks 1145

It were a pleasant pastime to construct A scale and table of belief—as thus—

Two columns, one for passion, one for proof;

Each rises as the other falls: and first, Passion a unit and against us—proof—

Nay, we must travel in another path, 1151 Or we're stuck fast for ever;—passion, then,

Shall be a unit for us; proof—no, passion! We'll not insult thy majesty by time,

Person, and place—the where, the when, the how, 1155

And all particulars that dull brains require

To constitute the spiritless shape of Fact, They bow to, calling the idol, Demonstration.

A whipping to the Moralists who preach That misery is a sacred thing: for me,

I know no cheaper engine to degrade a man, 1161

Nor any half so sure. This Stripling's mind

Is shaken till the dregs float on the surface;

And, in the storm and anguish of the heart,

He talks of a transition in his Soul, 1165 And dreams that he is happy. We dissect

The senseless body, and why not the mind?—

These are strange sights—the mind of man, upturned,

Is in all natures a strange spectacle; In some a hideous one—hem! shall I stop? 1170

No.—Thoughts and feelings will sink deep, but then

They have no substance. Pass but a few minutes,

And something shall be done which Memory

May touch, whene'er her Vassals are at work.

Enter MARMADUKE, from behind

Osw. [turning to meet him]. But listen, for my peace—

Mar. Why, I believe you.

Osw. But hear the proofs—

Mar. Ay, prove that when two peas Lie snugly in a pod, the pod must then 1177

Be larger than the peas—prove this—'twere matter

Worthy the hearing. Fool was I to dream

It ever could be otherwise!

Osw. Last night, 1180 When I returned with water from the brook,

I overheard the Villains—every word Like red-hot iron burnt into my heart.

Said one, 'It is agreed on. The blind Man

Shall feign a sudden illness, and the Girl, 1185

Who on her journey must proceed alone, Under pretence of violence, be seized.

She is,' continued the detested Slave, 'She is right willing—strange if she were not!—

They say Lord Clifford is a savage man; 1190

But, faith, to see him in his silken tunic, Fitting his low voice to the minstrel's harp,

There's witchery in't. I never knew a maid

That could withstand it. True,' continued he,

'When we arranged the affair, she wept a little 1195

(Not the less welcome to my Lord for that)

And said, "My Father he will have it so."'

Mar. I am your hearer.

Osw. This I caught, and more That may not be retold to any ear.

The obstinate bolt of a small iron door Detained them near the gateway of the Castle. 1201

By a dim lantern's light I saw that wreaths

Of flowers were in their hands, as if designed

For festive decoration; and they said, With brutal laughter and most foul allusion, 1205

That they should share the banquet with their Lord

And his new Favorite.

Mar. Misery!—

Osw. I knew

How you would be disturbed by this dire news,

And therefore chose this solitary Moor, Here to impart the tale, of which, last night, 1210

I strove to ease my mind, when our two Comrades,

Commissioned by the Band, burst in upon us.

Mar. Last night, when moved to lift the avenging steel,
I did believe all things were shadows—yea,
Living or dead all things were bodiless,
All but the mutual mockeries of body,
Till that same star summoned me back again.

Now I could laugh till my ribs ached.
Oh, Fool!

To let a creed, built in the heart of things,
Dissolve before a twinkling atom!—Oswald,

I could fetch lessons out of wiser schools
Than you have entered, were it worth the pains.

Young as I am, I might go forth a teacher,
And you should see how deeply I could reason

Of love in all its shapes, beginnings,
ends;

Of moral qualities in their diverse aspects;
Of actions, and their laws and tendencies.

Osw. You take it as it merits—
Mar. One a King,

General or Cham, Sultan or Emperor,
Strews twenty acres of good meadow-ground

With carcasses, in lineament and shape
And substance, nothing differing from his own,

But that they cannot stand up of themselves;
Another sits i' th' sun, and by the hour

Floats kingcups in the brook—a Hero one
We call, and scorn the other as Time's spendthrift;

But have they not a world of common ground
To occupy—both fools, or wise alike,

Each in his way?

Osw. Troth, I begin to think so.
Mar. Now for the corner-stone of my philosophy:

I would not give a denier for the man
Who, on such provocation as this earth

Yields, could not chuck his babe beneath the chin,
And send it with a filip to its grave.

Osw. Nay, you leave me behind.
Mar. That such a One,

So pious in demeanour! in his look
So saintly and so pure!—Harkee, my Friend,

I'll plant myself before Lord Clifford's Castle,
A surly mastiff kennels at the gate,

And he shall howl and I will laugh, a medley

Most tunable.

Osw. In faith, a pleasant scheme;
But take your sword along with you, for that

Might in such neighbourhood find seemly use.—
But first, how wash our hands of this old Man?

Mar. Oh yes, that mole, that viper in the path;
Plague on my memory, him I had forgotten.

Osw. You know we left him sitting—
see him yonder.

Mar. Ha! ha!—
Osw. As 'twill be but a moment's work,

I will stroll on; you follow when 'tis done.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE changes to another part of the Moor at a short distance—HERBERT is discovered seated on a stone

Her. A sound of laughter, too!—'tis well—I feared

The Stranger had some pitiable sorrow
Pressing upon his solitary heart.

[*Hush!*—'tis the feeble and earth-loving wind
That creeps along the bells of the crisp heather.]

Alas! 'tis cold—I shiver in the sun-shine—

What can this mean? There is a psalm that speaks
Of God's parental mercies—with Idonea

I used to sing it.—Listen!—what foot is there?

Enter MARMADUKE

Mar. [*aside*—looking at HERBERT]. And I have loved this Man! and she hath loved him!

And I loved her, and she loves the Lord Clifford!

And there it ends;—if this be not enough
To make mankind merry for evermore,

Then plain it is as day that eyes were made
For a wise purpose—verily to weep with!

[*Looking round.*]
A pretty prospect this, a masterpiece

Of Nature, finished with most curious skill!

[*To HERBERT*]. Good Baron, have you ever practised tillage?

Pray tell me what this land is worth by the acre.

Her. How glad I am to hear your voice!
I know not

Wherein I have offended you;—last night I found in you the kindest of Protectors;

This morning, when I spoke of weariness,
You from my shoulder took my scrip and threw it

THE BORDERERS

[ACT III]

About your own; but for these two hours

^{past}
Once only have you spoken, when the
lark ¹²⁸⁵

Whirled from among the fern beneath our
feet,

And I, no coward in my better days,
Was almost terrified.

Mar. That's excellent!—
So you bethought you of the many ways
In which a man may come to his end,
whose crimes ¹²⁹⁰

Have roused all Nature up against him—
pshaw!—

Her. For mercy's sake, is nobody in
sight?

No traveller, peasant, herdsman?

Mar. Not a soul:
Here is a tree, ragged, and bent, and
bare,

That turns its goat's-beard flakes of pea-
green moss ¹²⁹⁵

From the stern breathing of the rough
sea-wind;

This have we, but no other company:
Commend me to the place. If a man
should die

And leave his body here, it were all one
As he were twenty fathoms underground.

Her. Where is our common Friend?

Mar. A ghost, methinks—
The Spirit of a murdered man, for in-
stance—

Might have fine room to ramble about
here,

A grand domain to squeak and gibber in.
Her. Lost Man! if thou have any close-
pent guilt ¹³⁰⁵

Pressing upon thy heart, and this the
hour

Of visitation—

Mar. A bold word from you!
Her. Restore him, Heaven!

Mar. The desperate
Wretch!—A Flower,

Fairest of all flowers, was she once, but
now

They have snapped her from the stem—
Poh! let her lie ¹³¹⁰

Besoiled with mire, and let the houseless
snail

Feed on her leaves. You knew her well—
ay, there,

Old Man! you were a very Lynx, you
knew

The worm was in her—

Her. Mercy! Sir, what mean you?
Mar. You have a Daughter!

Her. Oh that she were here!—
She hath an eye that sinks into all
hearts, ¹³¹⁶

And if I have in aught offended you,
Soon would her gentle voice make peace
between us.

Mar. [*aside*]. I do believe he weeps—
I could weep too—

There is a vein of her voice that runs
through his: ¹³²⁰

Even such a Man my fancy bodied forth
From the first moment that I loved the

Maid;
And for his sake I loved her more: these
tears—

I did not think that aught was left in me
Of what I have been—yes, I thank thee,
Heaven! ¹³²⁵

One happy thought has passed across my
mind.

—It may not be—I am cut off from man;
No more shall I be man—no more shall I
Have human feelings!—[*To HERBERT*]—

Now, for a little more
About your Daughter!

Her. Troops of armed men,
Met in the roads, would bless us; little
children, ¹³³¹

Rushing along in the full tide of play,
Stood silent as we passed them! I have
heard

The boisterous carman, in the miry road,
Check his loud whip and hail us with
mild voice, ¹³³⁵

And speak with milder voice to his poor
beasts.

Mar. And whither were you going?

Her. Learn, young Man,—
To fear the virtuous, and reverence misery,
Whether too much for patience, or, like
mine,

Softened till it becomes a gift of mercy.
Mar. Now, this is as it should be!

Her. I am weak!— ¹³⁴¹

My Daughter does not know how weak
I am;

And, as thou see'st, under the arch of
heaven

Here do I stand, alone, to helplessness,
By the good God, our common Father,
doomed!— ¹³⁴⁵

But I had once a spirit and an arm—
Mar. Now, for a word about your
Barony:

I fancy when you left the Holy Land,
And came to—what's your title—eh?
your claims

Were undisputed!

Her. Like a mendicant, ¹³⁵⁰

Whom no one comes to meet, I stood
alone;—

I murmured—but, remembering Him who
feeds

The pelican and ostrich of the desert,
From my own threshold I looked up to
Heaven

And did not want glimmerings of quiet
hope. ¹³⁵⁵

So from the court I passed, and down the
brook,

Led by its murmur, to the ancient oak
I came; and when I felt its cooling shade,
I sate me down, and cannot but believe—
While in my lap I held my little Babe
And clasped her to my heart, my heart
that ached ¹³⁶¹
More with delight than grief—I heard a
voice

Such as by Cherith on Elijah called;
It said, 'I will be with thee.' A little boy,
A shepherd-lad, ere yet my trance was
gone, ¹³⁶⁵
Hailed us as if he had been sent from
heaven,

And said, with tears, that he would be
our guide:
I had a better guide—that innocent
Babe—

Her, who hath saved me, to this hour,
from harm,
From cold, from hunger, penury, and
death; ¹³⁷⁰

To whom I owe the best of all the good
I have, or wish for, upon earth—and more
And higher far than lies within earth's
bounds:

Therefore I bless her: when I think of
Man,
I bless her with sad spirit,—when of
God, ¹³⁷⁵

I bless her in the fulness of my joy! [✓]
Mar. The name of daughter in his
mouth, he prays! [✓]

With nerves so steady, that the very flies
Sit unmolested on his staff.—Innocent!
If he were innocent—then he would
tremble ¹³⁸⁰

And be disturbed, as I am. [*Turning
aside*]. I have read

In Story, what men now alive have wit-
nessed,

How, when the People's mind was racked
with doubt,

Appeal was made to the great Judge: the
Accused

With naked feet walked over burning
ploughshares. ¹³⁸⁵

Here is a Man by Nature's hand prepared
For a like trial, but more merciful.

Why else have I been led to this bleak
Waste?

Bare is it, without house or track, and
destitute

Of obvious shelter, as a shipless sea. ¹³⁹⁰
Here will I leave him—here—All-seeing
God!

Such as *he* is, and sore perplexed as I am,
I will commit him to this final *Ordeal*!—

He heard a voice—a shepherd-lad came to
him

And was his guide; if once, why not
again, ¹³⁹⁵

And in this desert? If never—then the
whole

Of what he says, and looks, and does,
and is,

Makes up one damning falsehood. Leave
him here

To cold and hunger!—Pain is of the
heart,

And what are a few throes of bodily
suffering ¹⁴⁰⁰

If they can waken one pang of remorse?
[*Goes up to HERBERT.*]

Old Man! my wrath is as a flame burnt
out,

It cannot be rekindled. Thou art here
Led by my hand to save thee from per-
dition;

Thou wilt have time to breathe and
think—

Her. Oh, Mercy!

Mar. I know the need that all men
have of mercy, ¹⁴⁰⁶

And therefore leave thee to a righteous
judgment.

Her. My Child, my blessed Child!

Mar. No more of that;
Thou wilt have many guides if thou art
innocent;

Yea, from the utmost corners of the
earth, ¹⁴¹⁰

That Woman will come o'er this Waste
to save thee.

[*He pauses and looks at HERBERT's staff.*]

Ha! what is here? and carved by her
own hand! [*Reads upon the staff.*]

'I am eyes to the blind, saith the Lord.
He that puts his trust in me shall not
fail!'

Yes, be it so;—repent and be forgiven—
God and that staff are now thy only
guides. ¹⁴¹⁶

[*He leaves HERBERT on the Moor.*]

SCENE, *An eminence, a Beacon on the
summit*

LACY, WALLACE, LENNOX, &c. &c.

Several of the Band [*confusedly*]. But
patience!

One of the Band. Curses on that
Traitor, Oswald!—

Our Captain made a prey to foul device!—
Len. [*to WALLACE*]. His tool, the
wandering Beggar, made last night

A plain confession, such as leaves no
doubt, ¹⁴²⁰

Knowing what otherwise we know too
well,

That she revealed the truth. Stand by
me now;

For rather would I have a nest of vipers
Between my breast-plate and my skin
than make

Oswald my special enemy, if you ¹⁴²⁵
Deny me your support.

Lacy. We have been fooled—

THE BOWDERERS

[ACT III]

But for the motive?

Wal. Natures such as his
Spin motives out of their own bowels,
Lacy!

I learn'd this when I was a Confessor.
I know him well; there needs no other
motive

Than that most strange incontinence in
crime

Which haunts this Oswald. Power is life
to him

And breath and being; where he cannot
govern,

He will destroy.

Lacy. To have been trapped like
moles!—

Yes, you are right, we need not hunt for
motives:

There is no crime from which this man
would shrink;

He recks not human law; and I have
noticed

That often, when the name of God is
uttered,

A sudden blankness overspreads his face.

Len. Yet, reasoner as he is, his pride
has built

Some uncouth superstition of its own.

Wal. I have seen traces of it.

Len. Once he headed
A band of Pirates in the Norway seas;

And when the King of Denmark sum-
moned him

To the oath of fealty, I well remember,
'Twas a strange answer that he made; he

said,
'I hold of Spirits, and the Sun in heaven.'

Lacy. He is no madman.

Wal. A most subtle doctor
Were that man, who could draw the line

that parts
Pride and her daughter, Cruelty, from

Madness,
That should be scourged, not pitied.

Restless Minds,
Such Minds as find amid their fellow-men

No heart that loves them, none that they
can love,

Will turn perforce and seek for sympathy
In dim relation to imagined Beings.

One of the Band. What if he mean to
offer up our Captain

An expiation and a sacrifice
To those infernal fiends!

Wal. Now, if the event
Should be as Lennox has foretold, then

swear,
My Friends, his heart shall have as many

wounds
As there are daggers here.

Lacy. What need of swearing!
One of the Band. Let us away!

Another. Away!
A third. Hark! how the horns

Of those Scotch Rovers echo through the
vale.

Lacy. Stay you behind; and, when
the sun is down,

Light up this beacon.

One of the Band. You shall be obeyed.
[They go out together.]

SCENE, *The Wood on the edge of the Moor*

MARMADUKE [alone]

Mar. Deep, deep and vast, vast be-
yond human thought,

Yet calm.—I could believe that there
was here

The only quiet heart on earth. In terror,
Remembered terror, there is peace and
rest.

Enter OSWALD

Osw. Ha! my dear Captain.

Mar. A later meeting, Oswald,
Would have been better timed.

Osw. Alone, I see;
You have done your duty. I had hopes,

which now
I feel that you will justify.

Mar. I had fears,
From which I have freed myself—but 'tis

my wish
To be alone, and therefore we must part.

Osw. Nay, then—I am mistaken.
There's a weakness

About you still; you talk of solitude—
I am your friend.

Mar. What need of this assurance
At any time? and why given now?

Osw. Because
You are now in truth my Master; you

have taught me
What there is not another living man

Had strength to teach;—and therefore
gratitude

Is bold, and would relieve itself by praise.

Mar. Wherefore press this on me?

Osw. Because I feel
That you have shown, and by a signal

instance,
How they who would be just must seek

the rule
By diving for it into their own bosoms.

To-day you have thrown off a tyranny
That lives but in the torpid acquiescence

Of our emasculated souls, the tyranny
Of the world's masters, with the musty

rules
By which they uphold their craft from

age to age:
You have obeyed the only law that sense

Submits to recognise; the immediate law,
From the clear light of circumstances,

flashed
Upon an independent Intellect.

Henceforth new prospects open on your
path;

Your faculties should grow with the demand;

I still will be your friend, will cleave to you

Through good and evil, obloquy and scorn, 1500

Or as they dare to follow on your steps.

Mar. I would be left alone.

Osw. [exultingly]. I know your motives! I am not of the world's presumptuous judges,

Who damn where they can neither see nor feel,

With a hard-hearted ignorance; your struggles 1505

I witness'd, and now hail your victory.

Mar. Spare me awhile that greeting.

Osw. It may be That some there are, squeamish half-thinking cowards,

Who will turn pale upon you, call you murderer,

And you will walk in solitude among them. 1510

A mighty evil for a strong-built mind!—Join twenty tapers of unequal height

And light them joined, and you will see the less

How 'twill burn down the taller; and they all 1514

Shall prey upon the tallest. Solitude!—The Eagle lives in Solitude!

Mar. Even so,

The Sparrow so on the house-top, and I, The weakest of God's creatures, stand resolved

To abide the issue of my act, alone.

Osw. Now would you? and for ever?—

My young Friend, 1520

As time advances either we become The prey or masters of our own past deeds.

Fellowship we *must* have, willing or no; And if good Angels fail, slack in their duty,

Substitutes, turn our faces where we may, Are still forthcoming; some which, though they bear 1526

Ill names, can render no ill services, In recompense for what themselves required.

So meet extremes in this mysterious world,

And opposites thus melt into each other.

Mar. Time, since Man first drew breath,

has never moved 1531

With such a weight upon his wings as now;

But they will soon be lightened.

Osw. Ay, look up—

Cast round you your mind's eye, and you will learn

Fortitude is the child of Enterprise: 1535 Great actions move our admiration, chiefly

Because they carry in themselves an earnest

That we can suffer greatly.

Mar. Very true.

Osw. Action is transitory—a step, a blow,

The motion of a muscle—this way or that— 1540

'Tis done, and in the after-vacancy We wonder at ourselves like men betrayed:

Suffering is permanent, obscure and dark, And shares the nature of infinity.

Mar. Truth—and I feel it.

Osw. What! if you had bid Eternal farewell to unmingled joy 1546

And the light dancing of the thoughtless heart;

It is the toy of fools, and little fit For such a world as this. The wise abjure

All thoughts whose idle composition lives In the entire forgetfulness of pain. 1551

—I see I have disturbed you.

Mar. By no means.

Osw. Compassion!—pity!—pride can do without them;

And what if you should never know them more!—

He is a puny soul who, feeling pain, 1555 Finds ease because another feels it too.

If e'er I open out this heart of mine It shall be for a nobler end—to teach

And not to purchase pining sympathy. —Nay, you are pale.

Mar. It may be so.

Osw. Remorse— It cannot live with thought; think on, think on. 1561

And it will die. What! in this universe, Where the least things control the greatest, where

The faintest breath that breathes can move a world;

What! feel remorse, where, if a cat had sneezed, 1565

A leaf had fallen, the thing had never been

Whose very shadow gnaws us to the vitals.

Mar. Now, whither are you wandering?

That a man, So used to suit his language to the time, Should thus so widely differ from himself— 1570

It is most strange.

Osw. Murder!—what's in the word!— I have no cases by me ready made

To fit all deeds. Carry him to the Camp!— A shallow project;—you of late have seen

More deeply, taught us that the institutes 1575

Of Nature, by a cunning usurpation Banished from human intercourse, exist

THE BORDERERS

[ACT III]

Only in our relations to the brutes
That make the fields their dwelling. ✓ If
a snake

Crawl from beneath our feet we do not ask
A license to destroy him: our good govern-
ors 1581

Hedge in the life of every pest and plague
That bears the shape of man; and for
what purpose,

But to protect themselves from extirpa-
tion?—

This flimsy barrier you have overleaped.

Mar. My Office is fulfilled—the Man is
now 1586

Delivered to the Judge of all things.

Osw. Dead!

Mar. I have borne my burthen to its
destined end.

Osw. This instant we'll return to our
Companions—

Oh how I long to see their faces again!

Enter IDONEA with Pilgrims who continue
their journey

Idon. [after some time]. What, Marmaduke!
now thou art mine for ever.
And Oswald, too! [To MARMADUKE.] On
will we to my Father 1592

With the glad tidings which this day
hath brought;

We'll go together, and, such proof received
Of his own rights restored, his gratitude
To God above will make him feel for ours.

Osw. I interrupt you?

Idon.

Think not so.

Mar.

That I should ever live to see this moment!

Idon. Forgive me.—Oswald knows it
all—he knows,

Each word of that unhappy letter fell 1600
As a blood-drop from my heart.

Osw.

'Twas even so.

Mar. I have much to say, but for
whose ear?—not thine.

Idon. Ill can I bear that look—Plead
for me, Oswald!

You are my Father's Friend.

[To MARMADUKE]. Alas, you know not,
And never can you know, how much he
loved me. 1605

Twice had he been to me a father, twice
Had given me breath, and was I not to be
His daughter, once his daughter? could I
withstand

His pleading face, and feel his clasping
arms,

And hear his prayer that I would not for-
sake him 1610

In his old age— [Hides her face.

Mar. Patience—Heaven grant
me patience!—

She weeps, she weeps—my brain shall
burn for hours

Ere I can shed a tear.

Idon.

I was a woman;

And, balancing the hopes that are the
dearest

To womankind with duty to my Father,
I yielded up those precious hopes, which
nought 1616

On earth could else have wrested from
me;—if erring,

Oh let me be forgiven!

Mar.

I do forgive thee.

Idon. But take me to your arms—this
breast, alas!

It throbs, and you have a heart that does
not feel it. 1620

Mar. [exultingly]. She is innocent.

[He embraces her.

Osw. [aside]. Were I a Moralist,
I should make wondrous revolution here;

It were a quaint experiment to show
The beauty of truth— [Addressing them.

I see I interrupt you;

I shall have business with you, Marmaduke; 1625

Follow me to the Hostel. [Exit OSWALD.

Idon.

Marmaduke,

This is a happy day. My Father soon
Shall sun himself before his native doors;
The lame, the hungry, will be welcome
there.

No more shall he complain of wasted
strength, 1630

Of thoughts that fail, and a decaying
heart;

His good works will be balm and life to
him.

Mar. This is most strange!—I know
not what it was,

But there was something which most
plainly said 1634

That thou wert innocent.

Idon.

How innocent!—

Oh heavens! you've been deceived.

Mar.

Thou art a Woman

To bring perdition on the universe.

Idon. Already I've been punished to
the height

Of my offence. [Smiling affectionately.

I see you love me still,

The labours of my hand are still your joy;
Bethink you of the hour when on your
shoulder 1641

I hung this belt.

[Pointing to the belt on which was
suspended HERBERT'S scrip.

Mar. Mercy of Heaven! [Sinks.

Idon. What ails you! [Distractedly.

Mar. The scrip that held his food, and
I forgot

To give it back again!

Idon. What mean your words?

Mar. I know not what I said—all may
be well. 1645

Idon. That smile hath life in it!

ACT IV]

THE BORDERERS

Mar. This road is perilous;
I will attend you to a Hut that stands
Near the wood's edge—rest there to-night,
I pray you:

For me, I have business, as you heard,
with Oswald, 1649
But will return to you by break of day.
[Exeunt.]

ACT IV

SCENE, *A desolate prospect—a ridge of rocks—a Chapel on the summit of one—Moon behind the rocks—night stormy—irregular sound of a bell—HERBERT enters exhausted*

Her. That Chapel-bell in mercy seemed
to guide me,
But now it mocks my steps; its fitful
stroke
Can scarcely be the work of human hands.
Hear me, ye Men upon the cliffs, if such
There be who pray nightly before the
Altar. 1655
Oh that I had but strength to reach the
place!
My Child—my Child—dark—dark—I
faint—this wind—
These stifling blasts—God help me!

Enter ELDRED

Eld. Better this bare rock,
Though it were tottering over a man's
head,
Than a tight case of dungeon walls for
shelter 1660
From such rough dealing.

[A moaning voice is heard.]

Ha! what sound is that?
Trees creaking in the wind (but none are
here)
Send forth such noises—and that weary
bell!
Surely some evil Spirit abroad to-night
Is ringing it—'twould stop a Saint in
prayer, 1665
And that—what is it? never was sound
so like
A human groan. Ha! what is here?

Poor Man—
Murdered! alas! speak—speak, I am your
friend:

No answer—hush—lost wretch, he lifts
his hand

And lays it to his heart—[Kneels to him].

I pray you speak! 1670

What has befallen you?

Her. [Jeely]. A stranger has done this,
And in the arms of a stranger I must die.

Eld. Nay, think not so: come, let me
raise you up: [Raises him.]

This is a dismal place—well—that is
well— 1674

I was too fearful—take me for your guide

And your support—my hat is not far off.
[Draws him gently off the stage.]

SCENE, *A room in the Hostel—
MARMADUKE and OSWALD*

Mar. But for Idonea!—I have cause to
think

That she is innocent.

Osw. Leave that thought awhile
As one of those beliefs which in their
hearts

Lovers lock up as pearls, though oft no
better 1680

Than feathers clinging to their points of
passion.

This day's event has laid on me the duty
Of opening out my story; you must hear
it,

And without further preface.—In my
youth,

Except for that abatement which is paid
By envy as a tribute to desert, 1686

I was the pleasure of all hearts, the dar-
ling

Of every tongue—as you are now. You've
heard

That I embarked for Syria. On our
voyage

Was hatched among the crew a foul Con-
spiracy 1690

Against my honour, in the which our
Captain

Was, I believed, prime Agent. The wind
fell;

We lay becalmed week after week, until
The water of the vessel was exhausted;

I felt a double fever in my veins, 1695
Yet rage suppressed itself;—to a deep
stillness

Did my pride tame my pride;—for many
days,

On a dead sea under a burning sky,
I brooded o'er my injuries, deserted

By man and nature;—if a breeze had
blown, 1700

It might have found its way into my
heart,

And I had been—no matter—do you
mark me?

Mar. Quick—to the point—if any un-
told crime

Doth haunt your memory,

Osw. Patience, hear me further!—
One day in silence did we drift at
noon 1705

By a bare rock, narrow, and white, and
bare;

No food was there, no drink, no grass, no
shade,

No tree, nor jutting eminence, nor form
Inanimate large as the body of man,

Nor any living thing whose lot of life 1710

Might stretch beyond the measure of one
moon.

THE BORDERERS

[ACT IV

To dig for water on the spot, the Captain
Landed with a small troop, myself being
one:

There I reproached him with his treachery.

Imperious at all times, his temper rose;
He struck me; and that instant had I
killed him, ¹⁷¹⁶

And put an end to his insolence, but my
Comrades

Rushed in between us: then did I insist
(All hated him, and I was stung to madness)

That we should leave him there, alive!—
we did so. ¹⁷²⁰

Mar. And he was famished?

Osw. Naked was the spot;
Methinks I see it now—how in the sun
Its stony surface glittered like a shield;
And in that miserable place we left him,
Alone but for a swarm of minute creatures ¹⁷²⁵

Not one of which could help him while
alive,

Or mourn him dead.

Mar. A man by men cast off,
Left without burial! nay, not dead nor
dying,

But standing, walking, stretching forth
his arms,
In all things like ourselves but in the
agony ¹⁷³⁰

With which he called for mercy; and—
even so—

He was forsaken?

Osw. There is a power in sounds:
The cries he uttered might have stopped
the boat

That bore us through the water—
Mar. You returned
Upon that dismal hearing—did you not?

Osw. Some scoffed at him with hellish
mockery, ¹⁷³⁶
And laughed so loud it seemed that the
smooth sea

Did from some distant region echo us.

Mar. We all are of one blood, our
veins are filled

At the same poisonous fountain!
Osw. 'Twas an island

Only by sufferance of the winds and
waves, ¹⁷⁴¹

Which with their foam could cover it at
will.

I know not how he perished; but the
calm,

The same dead calm, continued many days.

Mar. But his own crime had brought
on him this doom, ¹⁷⁴⁵

His wickedness prepared it; these expedients

Are terrible, yet ours is not the fault.

Osw. The man was famished, and was
innocent!

Mar. Impossible!

Osw. The man had never wronged me.

Mar. Banish the thought, crush it, and
be at peace. ¹⁷⁵⁰

His guilt was marked—these things could
never be

Were there not eyes that see, and for
good ends,

Where ours are baffled.

Osw. I had been deceived.

Mar. And from that hour the miserable man ¹⁷⁵⁴

No more was heard of?

Osw. I had been betrayed.

Mar. And he found no deliverance!

Osw. The Crew

Gave me a hearty welcome; they had laid
The plot to rid themselves, at any cost,
Of a tyrannic Master whom they loathed.
So we pursued our voyage: when we
landed, ¹⁷⁶⁰

The tale was spread abroad; my power
at once

Shrunk from me; plans and schemes, and
lofty hopes—

All vanished. I gave way—do you attend?

Mar. The Crew deceived you?

Osw. Nay, command yourself.

Mar. It is a dismal night—how the
wind howls! ¹⁷⁶⁵

Osw. I hid my head within a Convent,
there

Lay passive as a dormouse in mid winter.
That was no life for me—I was o'er-

thrown,

But not destroyed.

Mar. The proofs—you ought

to have seen
The guilt—have touched it—felt it at
your heart— ¹⁷⁷⁰

As I have done.

Osw. A fresh tide of Crusaders
Drove by the place of my retreat: three

nights
Did constant meditation dry my blood;

Three sleepless nights I passed in sound-
ing on,

Through words and things, a dim and
perilous way; ¹⁷⁷⁵

And, wheresoe'er I turned me, I beheld
A slavery compared to which the dungeon

And clanking chains are perfect liberty.
You understand me—I was comforted;

I saw that every possible shape of ac-
tion ¹⁷⁸⁰

Might lead to good—I saw it and burst
forth,

Thirsting for some of those exploits that
fill

The earth for sure redemption of lost
peace.

[Marking MARMADUKE'S countenance.
Nay, you have had the worst. Ferocity

Subsided in a moment, like a wind ¹⁷⁸⁵

That drops down dead out of a sky it
vexed.

And yet I had within me evermore
A salient spring of energy; I mounted
From action up to action with a mind
That never rested—without meat or
drink 1790

Have I lived many days—my sleep was
bound

To purposes of reason—not a dream
But had a continuity and substance
That waking life had never power to give.

Mar. O wretched Human-kind!—
Until the mystery 1795

Of all this world is solved, well may we
envy

The worm, that, underneath a stone
whose weight

Would crush the lion's paw with mortal
anguish,

Doth lodge, and feed, and coil, and sleep,
in safety.

Fell not the wrath of Heaven upon those
traitors? 1800

Osw. Give not to them a thought.
From Palestine

We marched to Syria: oft I left the Camp,
When all that multitude of hearts was
still,

And followed on, through woods of
gloomy cedar,

Into deep chasms troubled by roaring
streams; 1805

Or from the top of Lebanon surveyed
The moonlight desert, and the moonlight
sea:

In these my lonely wanderings I perceived
What mighty objects do impress their
forms

To elevate our intellectual being; 1810
And felt, if ought on earth deserved a
curse,

'Tis that worst principle of ill which dooms
A thing so great to perish self-consumed.

—So much for my remorse!

Mar. Unhappy Man!
Osw. When from these forms I turned
to contemplate 1815

The World's opinions and her usages,
I seemed a Being who had passed alone

Into a region of futurity,
Whose natural element was freedom—

Mar. Stop—
I may not, cannot, follow thee.

Osw. You must. 1820
I had been nourished by the sickly food
Of popular applause. I now perceived

That we are praised, only as men in us
Do recognise some image of themselves,

An object counterpart of what they are,
Or the empty thing that they would wish
to be. 1826

I felt that merit has no surer test
Than obloquy; that, if we wish to serve

The world in substance, not deceive by
show,

We must become obnoxious to its hate,
Or fear disguised in simulated scorn. 1831

Mar. I pity, can forgive, you; but
those wretches—

That monstrous perfidy!
Osw. Keep down your wrath.

False Shame discarded, spurious Fame
despised,

Twin sisters both of Ignorance, I found
Life stretched before me smooth as some
broad way 1836

Cleared for a monarch's progress. Priests
might spin

Their veil, but not for me—'twas in fit
place

Among its kindred cobwebs. I had been,
And in that dream had left my native
land, 1840

One of Love's simple bondsmen—the soft
chain

Was off for ever; and the men, from
whom

This liberation came, you would destroy:
Join me in thanks for their blind services.

Mar. 'Tis a strange aching that, when
we would curse 1845

And cannot.—You have betrayed me—I
have done—

I am content—I know that he is guilt-
less—

That both are guiltless, without spot or
stain,

Mutually consecrated. Poor old Man!
And I had heart for this, because thou
lovedst 1850

Her who from very infancy had been
Light to thy path, warmth to thy blood!—

Together [Turning to OSWALD.
We propped his steps, he leaned upon us
both.

Osw. Ay, we are coupled by a chain of
adamant;

Let us be fellow-labourers, then, to en-
large 1855

Man's intellectual empire. We subside
In slavery; all is slavery; we receive

Laws, but we ask not whence those laws
have come;

We need an inward sting to goad us on.
Mar. Have you betrayed me? Speak
to that.

Osw. The mask, 1860
Which for a season I have stooped to
wear,

Must be cast off.—Know then that I was
urged,

(For other impulse let it pass) was driven,
To seek for sympathy, because I saw

In you a mirror of my youthful self; 1865
I would have made us equal once again,
But that was a vain hope. You have
struck home,

THE BORDERERS

[ACT IV

With a few drops of blood cut short the business;

Therein for ever you must yield to me.
But what is done will save you from the blank

Of living without knowledge that you live:

Now you are suffering—for the future day,

'Tis his who will command it.—Think of my story—

Herbert is innocent.

Mar. [in a faint voice, and doubtingly]. You do but echo

My own wild words?

Osw. Young Man, the seed must lie
Hid in the earth, or there can be no harvest;

'Tis Nature's law. What I have done in darkness

I will avow before the face of day.

Herbert is innocent.

Mar. What fiend could prompt
This action? Innocent!—oh breaking heart!—

Alive or dead, I'll find him. [Exit.
Osw. Alive—perdition! [Exit.

SCENE, The inside of a poor Cottage

ELEANOR and IDONEA seated

Idon. The storm beats hard—Mercy
for poor or rich,

Whose heads are shelterless in such a night!

A Voice without. Holla! to bed, good
Folks, within!

Elea. O save us! 1884
Idon. What can this mean?

Elea. Alas, for my poor husband!—
We'll have a counting of our flocks to-morrow;

The wolf keeps festival these stormy nights:

Be calm, sweet Lady, they are wassailers
[The voices die away in the distance.

Returning from their Feast—my heart
beats so—

A noise at midnight does so frighten me.
Idon. Hush! [Listening.

Elea. They are gone. On such
a night my husband, 1891

Dragged from his bed, was cast into a
dungeon,

Where, hid from me, he counted many
years,

A criminal in no one's eyes but theirs—
Not even in theirs—whose brutal violence 1895

So dealt with him.

Idon. I have a noble Friend
First among youths of knightly breeding,

One
Who lives but to protect the weak or injured.

There again!

Elea. 'Tis my husband's foot. 1899

Good Eldred
Has a kind heart; but his imprisonment
Has made him fearful, and he'll never be

The man he was.
Idon. I will retire;—good night!

[She goes within.

Enter ELDRED [hides a bundle].

Eld. Not yet in bed, Eleanor!—there
are stains in that frock which must be
washed out. 1905

Elea. What has befallen you?

Eld. I am belated, and you must know
the cause—[speaking low] that is the
blood of an unhappy Man.

Elea. Oh! we are undone for ever. 1910

Eld. Heaven forbid that I should lift
my hand against any man. Eleanor, I
have shed tears to-night, and it comforts
me to think of it.

Elea. Where, where is he? 1915

Eld. I have done him no harm, but—it
will be forgiven me; it would not have
been so once.

Elea. You have not buried anything?
You are no richer than when you left me?

Eld. Be at peace; I am innocent. 1921

Elea. Then God be thanked—
[A short pause; she falls upon his neck.

Eld. To-night I met with an old Man
lying stretched upon the ground—a sad
spectacle: I raised him up with the hope
that we might shelter and restore him.

Elea. [as if ready to run]. Where is
he? You were not able to bring him all
the way with you; let us return, I can help
you. 1930

[ELDRED shakes his head.

Eld. He did not seem to wish for life:
as I was struggling on, by the light of the
moon I saw the stains of blood upon my
clothes—he waved his hand, as if it were
all useless; and I let him sink again to the
ground. 1936

Elea. Oh that I had been by your side!

Eld. I tell you his hands and his body
were cold—how could I disturb his last
moments? he strove to turn from me as
if he wished to settle into sleep. 1941

Elea. But, for the stains of blood—
Eld. He must have fallen, I fancy, for
his head was cut; but I think his malady
was cold and hunger. 1945

Elea. Oh, Eldred, I shall never be able
to look up at this roof in storm or fair but
I shall tremble.

Eld. Is it not enough that my ill stars
have kept me abroad to-night till this
hour? I come home, and this is my comfort!
1952

Elea. But did he say nothing which
might have set you at ease?

ACT V]

Eld. I thought he grasped my hand while he was muttering something about his Child—his Daughter—[*starting as if he heard a noise*]. What is that? 1958

Elea. Eldred, you are a father.

Eld. God knows what was in my heart, and will not curse my son for my sake.

Elea. But you prayed by him? you waited the hour of his release? 1964

Eld. The night was wasting fast; I have no friend; I am spited by the world—his wound terrified me—if I had brought him along with me, and he had died in my arms!—I am sure I heard something breathing—and this chair! 1970

Elea. Oh, Eldred, you will die alone. You will have nobody to close your eyes—no hand to grasp your dying hand—I shall be in my grave. A curse will attend us all. 1975

Eld. Have you forgot your own troubles when I was in the dungeon?

Elea. And you left him alive?

Eld. Alive!—the damps of death were upon him—he could not have survived an hour. 1981

Elea. In the cold, cold night.

Eld. [in a savage tone]. Ay, and his head was bare; I suppose you would have had me lend my bonnet to cover it.—You will never rest till I am brought to a felon's end. 1987

Elea. Is there nothing to be done? cannot we go to the Convent?

Eld. Ay, and say at once that I murdered him! 1991

Elea. Eldred, I know that ours is the only house upon the Waste; let us take heart; this Man may be rich; and could he be saved by our means, his gratitude may reward us. 1996

Eld. 'Tis all in vain.

Elea. But let us make the attempt. This old Man may have a wife, and he may have children—let us return to the spot; we may restore him, and his eyes may yet open upon those that love him. 2003

Eld. He will never open them more; even when he spoke to me, he kept them firmly sealed, as if he had been blind.

Idon. [rushing out]. It is, it is, my Father—

Eld. We are betrayed!

[Looking at IDONEA.]
Elea. His Daughter!—God have mercy!

[Turning to IDONEA.]

Idon. [sinking down]. Oh! lift me up and carry me to the place. 2010
You are safe; the whole world shall not harm you.

Elea. This Lady is his Daughter.

Eld. [moved]. I'll lead you to the spot.

THE BORDERERS

Idon. [springing up]. Alive! you heard him breathe? quick, quick—
[Exeunt.]

ACT V

SCENE, A Wood on the edge of the Waste

Enter OSWALD and a Forester

For. He leaned upon the bridge that spans the glen, 2015
And down into the bottom cast his eye,
That fastened there, as it would check the current.

Osw. He listened too; did you not say he listened?

For. As if there came such moaning from the flood 2019
As is heard often after stormy nights.

Osw. But did he utter nothing?

For. See him there!

MARMADUKE appearing

Mar. Buzz, buzz, ye black and winged freebooters;

That is no substance which ye settle on!
For. His senses play him false; and see, his arms

Outspread, as if to save himself from falling!— 2025

Some terrible phantom I believe is now Passing before him, such as God will not Permit to visit any but a man

Who has been guilty of some horrid crime.

[MARMADUKE disappears.]

Osw. The game is up!—

For. If it be needful, Sir, 2030
I will assist you to lay hands upon him.

Osw. No, no, my Friend, you may pursue your business—

'Tis a poor wretch of an unsettled mind, Who has a trick of straying from his keepers;

We must be gentle. Leave him to my care. [Exit Forester.]

If his own eyes play false with him, these freaks 2036

Of fancy shall be quickly tamed by mine; The goal is reached. My Master shall become

A shadow of myself—made by myself.

SCENE, The edge of the Moor

MARMADUKE and ELDRED enter from opposite sides

Mar. [raising his eyes and perceiving ELDRED]. In any corner of this savage Waste 2040
Have you, good Peasant, seen a blind old Man?

Eld. I heard—

Mar. You heard him, where? when heard him?

THE BORDERS

[ACT V

Eld. As you know,
The first hours of last night were rough
with storm:

I had been out in search of a stray heifer;
Returning late, I heard a moaning sound;
Then, thinking that my fancy had deceived me, 2046

I hurried on, when straight a second moan,
A human voice distinct, struck on my ear.
So guided, distant a few steps, I found
An aged Man, and such as you describe.

Mar. You heard!—he called you to
him? Of all men 2051
The best and kindest!—but where is he?
guide me,

That I may see him.

Eld. On a ridge of rocks
A lonesome Chapel stands, deserted now:
The bell is left, which no one dares remove; 2055

And, when the stormy wind blows o'er
the peak,

It rings, as if a human hand were there
To pull the cord. I guess he must have
heard it;

And it had led him towards the precipice,
To climb up to the spot whence the sound
came; 2060

But he had failed through weakness.
From his hand

His staff had dropped, and close upon the
brink

Of a small pool of water he was laid,
As if he had stooped to drink, and so
remained 2064

Without the strength to rise.

Mar. Well, well, he lives,
And all is safe: what said he?

Eld. But few words:
He only spake to me of a dear Daughter,
Who, so he feared, would never see him
more:

And of a Stranger to him, One by whom
He had been sore misused; but he forgave
The wrong and the wrong-doer. You are
troubled— 2071

Perhaps you are his son?

Mar. The All-seeing knows,
I did not think he had a living Child.—
But whither did you carry him?

Eld. He was torn,
His head was bruised, and there was
blood about him— 2075

Mar. That was no work of mine.

Eld. Nor was it mine.

Mar. But had he strength to walk? I
could have borne him

A thousand miles.

Eld. I am in poverty,
And know how busy are the tongues of
men;

My heart was willing, Sir, but I am one
Whose good deeds will not stand by their
own light; 2081

And, though it smote me more than
words can tell,

I left him.

Mar. I believe that there are phantoms,
That in the shape of man do cross our
path

On evil instigation, to make sport 2085
Of our distress—and thou art one of them!
But things substantial have so pressed on
me—

Eld. My wife and children came into
my mind.

Mar. Oh Monster! Monster! there are
three of us,

And we shall howl together.

[After a pause and in a feeble voice,
I am deserted

At my worst need, my crimes have in a
net 2091

[Pointing to ELDRED] Entangled this poor
man? Where was it? where?

[Dragging him along.
Eld. 'Tis needless; spare your violence.

His Daughter—

Mar. Ay, in the word a thousand scor-
pions lodge:

This old man had a Daughter.

Eld. To the spot 2095
I hurried back with her.—Oh save me, Sir,
From such a journey!—there was a

black tree,

A single tree; she thought it was her
Father.—

Oh Sir, I would not see that hour again
For twenty lives. The daylight dawned,
and now— 2100

Nay; hear my tale, 'tis fit that you should
hear it—

As we approached, a solitary crow
Rose from the spot;—the Daughter clapped
her hands,

And then I heard a shriek so terrible

[MARMADUKE shrinks back.
The startled bird quivered upon the wing.

Mar. Dead, dead!—

Eld. [after a pause]. A dismal matter,
Sir, for me, 2106

And seems the like for you; if 'tis your
wish,

I'll lead you to his Daughter; but 'twere
best

That she should be prepared; I'll go be-
fore.

Mar. There will be need of preparation.
[ELDRED goes off.

Elea. [enters]. Master!

Your limbs sink under you, shall I sup-
port you? 2111

Mar. [taking her arm]. Woman, I've
lent my body to the service

Which now thou tak'st upon thee. God
forbid

That thou shouldst ever meet a like occa-
sion

With such a purpose in thine heart as mine was. ²¹¹⁵

Elea. Oh, why have I to do with things like these? ^[Exeunt.]

SCENE changes to the door of ELDRED'S cottage—IDONEA seated—enter ELDRED

Eld. Your Father, Lady, from a wilful hand

Has met unkindness; so indeed he told me,

And you remember such was my report: From what has just befallen me I have cause ²¹²⁰

To fear the very worst.

Idon. My Father is dead; Why dost thou come to me with words like these?

Eld. A wicked Man should answer for his crimes.

Idon. Thou seest me what I am.

Eld. It was most heinous, And doth call out for vengeance.

Idon. Do not add, I prithee, to the harm thou'st done already. ²¹²⁶

Eld. Hereafter you will thank me for this service.

Hard by a Man I met, who, from plain proofs

Of interfering Heaven, I have no doubt, Laid hands upon your Father. Fit it were You should prepare to meet him.

Idon. I have nothing ²¹³¹ To do with others; help me to my Father—

[She turns and sees MARMADUKE leaning on ELEANOR—throws herself upon his neck, and after some time,

In joy I met thee, but a few hours past; And thus we meet again; one human stay Is left me still in thee. Nay, shake not so.

Mar. In such a wilderness—to see no thing, ²¹³⁶

No, not the pitying moon!

Idon. And perish so.

Mar. Without a dog to moan for him.

Idon. Think not of it,

But enter there and see him how he sleeps, Tranquil as he had died in his own bed.

Mar. Tranquil—why not?

Idon. Oh, peace!

Mar. He is at peace; ²¹⁴¹

His body is at rest: there was a plot, A hideous plot, against the soul of man: It took effect—and yet I baffled it, In some degree.

Idon. Between us stood, I thought, A cup of consolation, filled from Heaven For both our needs; must I, and in thy presence, ²¹⁴⁷

Alone partake of it?—Belovèd Marmaduke!

Mar. Give me a reason why the wisest thing

That the earth owns shall never choose to die, ²¹⁵⁰

But some one must be near to count his groans.

The wounded deer retires to solitude, And dies in solitude: all things but man, All die in solitude.

[Moving towards the cottage door.]

Mysterious God,

If she had never lived I had not done it!—*Idon.* Alas, the thought of such a cruel death ²¹⁵⁶

Has overwhelmed him.—I must follow. *Eld.* Lady! ²¹⁶⁰

You will do well; *[she goes]* unjust suspicion may

Cleave to this Stranger: if, upon his entering,

The dead Man heave a groan, or from his side ²¹⁶⁵

Uplift his hand—that would be evidence.

Elea. Shame! Eldred, shame!

Mar. *[both returning].* The dead have but one face. *[To himself.]*

And such a Man—so meek and unoffending—

Helpless and harmless as a babe: a Man By obvious signal to the world's protection ²¹⁶⁵

Solemnly dedicated—to decoy him!—*Idon.* Oh, had you seen him living!—

Mar. I *(so filled*

With horror is this world) am unto thee The thing most precious that it now contains:

Therefore through me alone must be revealed ²¹⁷⁰

By whom thy Parent was destroyed, Idonea!

I have the proofs!—*Idon.* O miserable Father!

Thou didst command me to bless all mankind;

Nor to this moment have I ever wished Evil to any living thing; but hear me, Hear me, ye Heavens!—*[kneeling]*—may vengeance haunt the fiend ²¹⁷⁶

For this most cruel murder: let him live And move in terror of the elements;

The thunder send him on his knees to prayer

In the open streets, and let him think he sees, ²¹⁸⁰

If e'er he entereth the house of God, The roof, self-moved, unsettling o'er his head;

And let him, when he would lie down at night,

Point to his wife the blood-drops on his pillow!

Mar. My voice was silent, but my heart hath joined thee. ²¹⁸⁵

Idon. *[leaning on MARMADUKE.]* Left to the mercy of that savage Man!

THE BORDERERS

[ACT V

How could he call upon his Child!—O

Friend! [Turns to MARMADUKE.
My faithful true and only Comforter.

Mar. Ay, come to me and weep.

[He kisses her.

[To Eldred]. Yes, Varlet, look,
The devils at such sights do clap their
hands. [ELDRÉD retires alarmed.

Idon. Thy vest is torn, thy cheek is
deadly pale; 2191

Hast thou pursued the monster?

Mar. I have found him.—

Oh! would that thou hadst perished in
the flames!

Idon. Here art thou, then can I be
desolate?

Mar. There was a time, when this
protecting hand 2195

Availed against the mighty; never more
Shall blessings wait upon a deed of mine.

Idon. Wild words for me to hear, for
me, an orphan, 2198

Committed to thy guardianship by Heaven;
And, if thou hast forgiven me, let me hope,
In this deep sorrow, trust, that I am thine
For closer care;—here, is no malady.

[Taking his arm.

Mar. There, is a malady—

[Striking his heart and forehead.] And
here, and here,

A mortal malady. I am accurst:

All nature curses me, and in my heart
Thy curse is fixed; the truth must be laid
bare. 2206

It must be told, and borne. I am the man,
(Abused, betrayed, but how it matters not)
Presumptuous above all that ever breathed,
Who, casting as I thought a guilty Person
Upon Heaven's righteous judgment, did
become 2211

An instrument of Fiends. Through me,
through me,

Thy Father perished.

Idon. Perished—by what mischance?

Mar. Belovéd! if I dared, so would I
call thee—

Conflict must cease, and, in thy frozen
heart, 2215

The extremes of suffering meet in absolute
peace. [He gives her a letter.

Idon. [reads] 'Be not surprised if you
hear that some signal judgment has be-
fallen the man who calls himself your
father; he is now with me, as his signa-
ture will show: abstain from conjecture
till you see me.

'HERBERT.

'MARMADUKE.'

The writing Oswald's; the signature my
Father's; 2225

[Looks steadily at the paper] And here is
yours,—or do my eyes deceive me?

You have then seen my Father?

Mar. He has leaned

Upon this arm.

Idon. You led him towards the Convent?

Mar. That Convent was Stone-Arthur
Castle. Thither

We were his guides. I on that night re-
solved 2230

That he should wait thy coming till the day
Of resurrection.

Idon. Miserable Woman,

Too quickly moved, too easily giving way,
I put denial on thy suit, and hence, 2234

With the disastrous issue of last night,
Thy perturbation, and these frantic words.

Be calm, I pray thee!

Mar. Oswald—

Idon. Name him not.

Enter female Beggar

Beg. And he is dead!—that Moor—
how shall I cross it?

By night, by day, never shall I be able
To travel half a mile alone.—Good Lady!

Forgive me!—Saints forgive me. Had I
thought

It would have come to this!—

Idon. What brings you hither? speak!

Beg. [pointing to MARMADUKE]. This
innocent Gentleman. Sweet hea-
vens! I told him

Such tales of your dead Father!—God is
my judge,

I thought there was no harm: but that
bad Man, 2245

He bribed me with his gold, and looked
so fierce.

Mercy! I said I know not what—oh pity
me—

I said, sweet Lady, you were not his
Daughter—

Pity me, I am haunted;—thrice this day
My conscience made me wish to be struck
blind; 2250

And then I would have prayed, and had
no voice.

Idon. [to MARMADUKE]. Was it my Fa-
ther?—no, no, no, for he

Was meek and patient, feeble, old and blind,
Helpless, and loved me dearer than his life.

—But hear me. For one question, I have
a heart 2255

That will sustain me. Did you murder
him?

Mar. No, not by stroke of arm. But
learn the process:

Proof after proof was pressed upon me;
guilt

Made evident, as seemed, by blacker guilt,
Whose impious folds enwrapped even
thee; and truth 2260

And innocence, embodied in his looks,
His words and tones and gestures, did
but serve

With me to aggravate his crimes, and
heaped

Ruin upon the cause for which they
pleaded.

Then pity crossed the path of my resolve:
Confounded, I looked up to Heaven, and
cast,

Idonea! thy blind Father on the Ordeal
Of the bleak Waste—left him—and so he
died!

[IDONEA sinks senseless; Beggar,
ELEANOR, &c., crowd round, and
bear her off.

Why may we speak these things, and do
no more;

Why should a thrust of the arm have
such a power,

And words that tell these things be heard
in vain?

She is not dead. Why!—if I loved this
Woman,

I would take care she never woke again;
But she WILL wake, and she will weep for
me,

And say no blame was mine—and so, poor
fool,

Will waste her curses on another name.
[He walks about distractedly.

Enter OSWALD

Osw. [to himself]. Strong to o'erturn,
strong also to build up.

[To MARMADUKE.

The starts and sallies of our last encounter
Were natural enough; but that, I trust,
Is all gone by. You have cast off the
chains

That fettered your nobility of mind—
Delivered heart and head!

Let us to Palestine;

This is a paltry field for enterprise.

Mar. Ay, what shall we encounter next?
This issue—

'Twas nothing more than darkness deepening
darkness,
And weakness crowned with the impo-
tence of death!

Your pupil is, you see, an apt proficient
[ironically].

Start not!—Here is another face hard by;
Come, let us take a peep at both together,
And, with a voice at which the dead will
quake,

Resound the praise of your morality—
Of this too much.

[Drawing OSWALD towards the Cot-
tage—stops short at the door.

Men are there, millions, Oswald,
Who with bare hands would have plucked
out thy heart

And flung it to the dogs; but I am raised
Above, or sunk below, all further sense
Of provocation. Leave me, with the weight
Of that old Man's forgiveness on thy heart,
Pressing as heavily as it doth on mine.

Coward I have been; know, there lies not
now,

Within the compass of a mortal thought,
A deed that I would shrink from;—but
to endure,

That is my destiny. May it be thine:
Thy office, thy ambition, be henceforth
To feed remorse, to welcome every stinging
Of penitential anguish, yea with tears.

When seas and continents shall lie be-
tween us—

The wider space the better—we may find
In such a course fit links of sympathy,
An incommunicable rivalryship

Maintained, for peaceful ends beyond our
view.

[Confused voices—several of the band
enter—rush upon OSWALD and seize
him.

One of them. I would have dogged him
to the jaws of hell—

Osw. Ha! is it so!—That vagrant
Hag!—this comes

Of having left a thing like her alive!

[Aside.

Several voices. Despatch him!

Osw. If I pass beneath a rock
And shout, and, with the echo of my voice,
Bring down a heap of rubbish, and it

crush me,
I die without dishonour. Famished,
starved,

A Fool and Coward blended to my wish!
[Smiles scornfully and exultingly at
MARMADUKE.

Wal. 'Tis done! [stabs him].
Another of the band. The ruthless traitor!

Mar. A rash deed!—
With that reproof I do resign a station
Of which I have been proud.

Wil. [approaching MARMADUKE]. O my
poor Master!

Mar. Discerning Monitor, my faithful
Wilfred,

Why art thou here? [Turning to WALLACE.
Wallace, upon these Borders,

Many there be whose eyes will not want
cause

To weep that I am gone. Brothers in
arms!

Raise on that dreary Waste a monument
That may record my story; nor let words—

Few must they be, and delicate in their
touch

As light itself—be there withheld from
Her

Who, through most wicked arts, was made
an orphan

By One who would have died a thousand
times

To shield her from a moment's harm. To
you,

Wallace and Wilfred, I commend the
Lady,

By lowly nature reared, as if to make her
In all things worthier of that noble birth,
Whose long-suspended rights are now on
the eve 2336

Of restoration: with your tenderest care
Watch over her, I pray—sustain her—

Several of the band [eagerly]. Captain!

Mar. No more of that; in silence hear
my doom:

A hermitage has furnished fit relief 2340
To some offenders; other penitents,
Less patient in their wretchedness, have

fallen,

Like the old Roman, on their own sword's
point.

They had their choice: a wanderer *must*
I go,

The Spectre of that innocent Man, my
guide. 2345

No human ear shall ever hear me speak;
No human dwelling ever give me food,

Or sleep, or rest: but over waste and wild,
In search of nothing that this earth can

give,

But expiation, will I wander on— 2350
A Man by pain and thought compelled to

live,

Yet loathing life—till anger is appeased
In Heaven, and Mercy gives me leave to
die.

POEMS REFERRING TO THE PERIOD OF CHILDHOOD

I

[Composed March 26, 1802.—Published 1807.]

My heart leaps up when I behold

A rainbow in the sky:

So was it when my life began;

So is it now I am a man;

So be it when I shall grow old, 5

Or let me die!

The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

II

TO A BUTTERFLY

[Composed March 14, 1802.—Published 1807.]

STAY near me—do not take thy flight!

A little longer stay in sight!

Much converse do I find in thee,

Historian of my infancy!

Float near me; do not yet depart! 5

Dead times revive in thee:

Thou bring'st, gay creature as thou art!

A solemn image to my heart,

My father's family!

Oh! pleasant, pleasant were the days, 10

The time, when in our childish plays,

My sister Emmeline¹ and I

Together chased the butterfly!

A very hunter did I rush

Upon the prey;—with leaps and springs 15

I followed on from brake to bush;

But she, God love her! feared to brush

The dust from off its wings.

III

THE SPARROW'S NEST

[Composed 1801.—Published 1807.]

BEHOLD, within the leafy shade,
Those bright blue eggs together laid!

On me the chance-discovered sight

Gleamed like a vision of delight.

I started—seeming to espay 5

The home and sheltered bed,

The Sparrow's dwelling, which, hard by

My Father's house, in wet or dry

My sister Emmeline¹ and I

Together visited. 10

She looked at it and seemed to fear it;

Dreading, tho' wishing, to be near it:

Such heart was in her, being then

A little Prattler among men.

The Blessing of my later years 15

Was with me when a boy:

She gave me eyes, she gave me ears;

And humble cares, and delicate fears;

A heart, the fountain of sweet tears;

And love, and thought, and joy. 20

IV

FORESIGHT

[Composed April 28, 1802.—Published 1807.]

THAT is work of waste and ruin—

Do as Charles and I are doing!

Strawberry-blossoms, one and all,

We must spare them—here are many: 5

Look at it—the flower is small,

Small and low, though fair as any:

Do not touch it! summers two

I am older, Anne, than you.

Pull the primrose, sister Anne!

Pull as many as you can. 10

—Here are daisies, take your fill;

Pansies, and the cuckoo-flower:

Of the lofty daffodil

Make your bed, or make your bower;

Fill your lap and fill your bosom; 15

Only spare the strawberry-blossom!

¹ See Editor's Note, p. 699.

THE PERIOD OF CHILDHOOD

Primroses, the Spring may love them—
Summer knows but little of them:
Violets, a barren kind,
Withered on the ground must lie;
Daisies leave no fruit behind
When the pretty flowerets die;
Pluck them, and another year
As many will be blowing here.

God has given a kindlier power
To the favoured strawberry-flower.
Hither soon as spring is fled
You and Charles and I will walk;
Lurking berries, ripe and red,
Then will hang on every stalk,
Each within its leafy bower;
And for that promise spare the flower!

V

CHARACTERISTICS OF A CHILD THREE YEARS OLD

[Composed 1811.—Published 1815.]

LOVING she is, and tractable, though wild;
And Innocence hath privilege in her
To dignify arch looks and laughing eyes
And feats of cunning; and the pretty
round

Of trespasses, affected to provoke
Mock-chastisement and partnership in
play.

And, as a faggot sparkles on the hearth,
Not less if unattended and alone
Than when both young and old sit gathered round

And take delight in its activity;
Even so this happy Creature of herself
Is all-sufficient; solitude to her
Is blithe society, who fills the air
With gladness and involuntary songs.
Light are her sallies as the tripping
fawn's

Forth-startled from the fern where she
lay couched;

Unthought-of, unexpected, as the stir
Of the soft breeze ruffling the meadow-
flowers.

Or from before it chasing wantonly
The many-coloured images imprint
Upon the bosom of a placid lake.

VI

ADDRESS TO A CHILD

DURING A BOISTEROUS WINTER EVENING

BY MY SISTER

[Composed 1806.—Published 1815.]

WHAT way does the Wind come? What
way does he go?

He rides over the water, and over the
snow,

Through wood, and through vale; and
o'er rocky height,
Which the goat cannot climb, takes his
sounding flight;
He tosses about in every bare tree,
As, if you look up, you plainly may see;
But how he will come, and whither he
goes,
There's never a scholar in England knows.

He will suddenly stop in a cunning nook,
And ring a sharp 'larum;—but, if you
should look,
There's nothing to see but a cushion of
snow,
Round as a pillow, and whiter than milk,
And softer than if it were covered with
silk.

Sometimes he'll hide in the cave of a
rock,
Then whistle as shrill as the buzzard cock;
—Yet seek him,—and what shall you find
in the place?

Nothing but silence and empty space;
Save, in a corner, a heap of dry leaves,
That he's left, for a bed, to beggars or
thieves!

As soon as 'tis daylight to-morrow, with
me
You shall go to the orchard, and then you
will see

That he has been there, and made a great
rout,
And cracked the branches, and strewn
them about;

Heaven grant that he spare but that one
upright twig
That looked up at the sky so proud and
big

All last summer, as well you know,
Studded with apples, a beautiful show!

Hark! over the roof he makes a pause,
And growls as if he would fix his claws
Right in the slates, and with a huge
rattle

Drive them down, like men in a battle:
—But let him range round; he does us no
harm,

We build up the fire, we're snug and
warm;

Untouched by his breath see the candle
shines bright,
And burns with a clear and steady light;
Books have we to read,—but that half-
stified knell,

Alas! 'tis the sound of the eight o'clock
bell.

—Come now we'll to bed! and when we
are there

He may work his own will, and what
shall we care?

POEMS REFERRING TO

He may knock at the door,—we'll not let
him in;
May drive at the windows,—we'll laugh
at his din;
Let him seek his own home wherever it be;
Here's a cozy warm house for Edward¹
and me.

VII

THE MOTHER'S RETURN

BY THE SAME

[Composed April or May, 1807.—Published 1815.]

A MONTH, sweet Little-ones, is past
Since your dear Mother went away,—
And she to-morrow will return;
To-morrow is the happy day.

O blessed tidings! thought of joy!⁵
The eldest heard with steady glee;
Silent he stood; then laughed amain,—
And shouted, 'Mother, come to me!'

Louder and louder did he shout,
With witless hope to bring her near!—¹⁰
'Nay, patience! patience, little boy;
Your tender mother cannot hear.'

I told of hills, and far-off towns,
And long, long vales to travel through;
He listens, puzzled, sore perplexed,¹⁵
But he submits; what can he do?

No strife disturbs his sister's breast;
She wars not with the mystery
Of time and distance, night and day;
The bonds of our humanity.²⁰

Her joy is like an instinct, joy
Of kitten, bird, or summer fly;
She dances, runs without an aim,
She chatters in her ecstasy.

Her brother now takes up the note,²⁵
And echoes back his sister's glee;
They hug the infant in my arms,
As if to force his sympathy.

Then, settling into fond discourse,
We rested in the garden bower;
While sweetly shone the evening sun
In his departing hour.

We told o'er all that we had done,—
Our rambles by the swift brook's side
Far as the willow-skirted pool,
Where two fair swans together glide.³⁵

We talked of change, of winter gone,
Of green leaves on the hawthorn spray,
Of birds that build their nests and sing,
And all 'since Mother went away!'⁴⁰

¹ Edward — Johnnie, the household name of Wordsworth's eldest son. See note on *To a Butterfly*, p. 699.—ED.

To her these tales they will repeat,
To her our new-born tribes will show,
The goslings green, the ass's colt,
The lambs that in the meadow go.

—But see, the evening star comes forth!
To bed the children must depart;⁴⁶
A moment's heaviness they feel,
A sadness at the heart:

'Tis gone—and in a merry fit
They run up stairs in gamesome race;⁵⁰
I, too, infected by their mood,
I could have joined the wanton chase.

Five minutes past—and, O the change!
Asleep upon their beds they lie;
Their busy limbs in perfect rest,⁵⁵
And closed the sparkling eye.

VIII

ALICE FELL

OR, POVERTY

[Composed March 12, 13, 1802.—Published 1807.]

THE post-boy drove with fierce career,
For threatening clouds the moon had
drowned;

When, as we hurried on, my ear
Was smitten with a startling sound

As if the wind blew many ways,⁵
I heard the sound,—and more and more;
It seemed to follow with the chaise,
And still I heard it as before.²⁰

At length I to the boy called out;
He stopped his horses at the word,¹⁰
But neither cry, nor voice, nor shout,
Nor aught else like it, could be heard.

The boy then smacked his whip, and fast
The horses scampered through the rain;
But, hearing soon upon the blast¹⁵
The cry, I bade him halt again.

Forthwith alighting on the ground,
'Whence comes,' said I, 'this piteous
moan?'

And there a little Girl I found,
Sitting behind the chaise, alone.²⁰

'My cloak!' no other word she spake,
But loud and bitterly she wept,
As if her innocent heart would break;
And down from off her seat she leapt.

'What ails you, child?'—she sobbed,
'Look here!'²⁵

I saw it in the wheel entangled,
A weather-beaten rag as e'er
From any garden scare-crow dangled.

THE PERIOD OF CHILDHOOD

There, twisted between nave and spoke,
It hung, nor could at once be freed; 30
But our joint pains unloosed the cloak,
A miserable rag indeed!

'And whither are you going, child,
To-night along these lonesome ways?'
'To Durham,' answered she, half wild—
'Then come with me into the chaise.' 36

Insensible to all relief
Sat the poor girl, and forth did send
Sob after sob, as if her grief
Could never, never have an end. 40

'My child, in Durham do you dwell?'
She checked herself in her distress,
And said, 'My name is Alice Fell;
I'm fatherless and motherless.

'And I to Durham, Sir, belong.' 45
Again, as if the thought would choke
Her very heart, her grief grew strong;
And all was for her tattered cloak!

The chaise drove on; our journey's end
Was nigh; and, sitting by my side, 50
As if she had lost her only friend
She wept, nor would be pacified.

Up to the tavern-door we post;
Of Alice and her grief I told;
And I gave money to the host, 55
To buy a new cloak for the old.

'And let it be of duffil grey,
As warm a cloak as man can sell!'
Proud creature was she the next day,
The little orphan, Alice Fell! 60

IX

LUCY GRAY

OR, SOLITUDE

[Composed 1799.—Published 1800.]

OFT I had heard of Lucy Gray:
And, when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wide moor,
—The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

'To-night will be a stormy night—
You to the town must go;
And take a lantern, Child, to light
Your mother through the snow.'

'That, Father! will I gladly do:
'Tis scarcely afternoon—
The minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon!' 20

At this the Father raised his hook,
And snapped a fagot-band;
He plied his work;—and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe: 25
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time:
She wandered up and down; 30
And many a hill did Lucy climb:
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide;
But there was neither sound nor sight 35
To serve them for a guide.

At day-break on a hill they stood
That overlooked the moor;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,
A furlong from their door. 40

They wept—and, turning homeward, cried,
'In heaven we all shall meet;
—When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

Then downwards from the steep hill's
edge 45
They tracked the footmarks small;
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,
And by the long stone-wall;

And then an open field they crossed:
The marks were still the same; 50
They tracked them on, nor ever lost;
And to the bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank
5 Those footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank; 55
And further there were none!

—Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child; 10
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild. 60

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song 15
That whistles in the wind.

POEMS REFERRING TO

X

WE ARE SEVEN

[Composed 1798.—Published 1798.]

—A SIMPLE Child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?

I met a little cottage Girl:
She was eight years old, she said;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad:
Her eyes were fair, and very fair;
—Her beauty made me glad.

'Sisters and brothers, little maid,
How many may you be?'
'How many? Seven in all,' she said,
And wondering looked at me.

'And where are they? I pray you tell.'
She answered, 'Seven are we;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.

'Two of us in the church-yard lie,
My sister and my brother;
And, in the church-yard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother.'

'You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven! I pray you tell,
Sweet Maid, how this may be.'

Then did the little Maid reply,
'Seven boys and girls are we;
Two of us in the church-yard lie,
Beneath the church-yard tree.'

'You run about, my little Maid,
Your limbs they are alive;
If two are in the church-yard laid,
Then ye are only five.'

'Their graves are green, they may be
seen,'
The little Maid replied,
'Twelve steps or more from my mother's
door,
And they are side by side.

'My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem;
And there upon the ground I sit,
And sing a song to them.

'And often after sun-set, Sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

'The first that died was sister Jane;
In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her of her pain;
And then she went away.

'So in the church-yard she was laid;
And, when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played,
My brother John and I.

'And when the ground was white with
snow,
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side.'

'How many are you, then,' said I,
'If they two are in heaven!'
Quick was the little Maid's reply,
'O Master! we are seven.'

'But they are dead; those two are dead!
Their spirits are in heaven!'
'Twas throwing words away; for still
The little Maid would have her will,
And said, 'Nay, we are seven!'

XI

THE IDLE SHEPHERD-BOYS

OR, DUNGEON-GHYLL FORCE¹

A PASTORAL

[Composed 1800.—Published 1800.]

THE valley rings with mirth and joy;
Among the hills the echoes play
A never never ending song,
To welcome in the May.

The magpie chatters with delight;
The mountain raven's youngling brood
Have left the mother and the nest;
And they go rambling east and west
In search of their own food;
Or through the glittering vapours dart
In very wantonness of heart.

Beneath a rock, upon the grass,
Two boys are sitting in the sun;
Their work, if any work they have,
Is out of mind—or done.
On pipes of sycamore they play
The fragments of a Christmas hymn;
Or with that plant which in our dale
We call stag-horn, or fox's tail,
Their rusty hats they trim:
And thus, as happy as the day,
Those Shepherds wear the time away.

¹ *Ghyll*, in the dialect of Cumberland and West-
moreland, is a short and, for the most part, a steep
narrow valley, with a stream running through it.
Force is the word universally employed in these
dialects for waterfall.

THE PERIOD OF CHILDHOOD

Along the river's stony marge
The sand-lark chants a joyous song;
The thrush is busy in the wood,
And carols loud and strong.
A thousand lambs are on the rocks,
All newly born! both earth and sky
Keep jubilee, and, more than all,
Those boys with their green coronal;
They never hear the cry,
That plaintive cry! which up the hill
Comes from the depth of Dungeon-Ghyll.

Said Walter, leaping from the ground,
'Down to the stump of yon old yew
We'll for our whistles run a race.'
—Away the shepherds flew;
They leapt—they ran—and when they
came
Right opposite to Dungeon-Ghyll,
Seeing that he should lose the prize,
'Stop!' to his comrade Walter cries—
James stopped with no good will:
Said Walter then, exulting; 'Here
You'll find a task for half a year.

'Cross, if you dare, where I shall cross—
Come on, and tread where I shall tread.'
The other took him at his word,
And followed as he led.
It was a spot which you may see
If ever you to Langdale go;
Into a chasm a mighty block
Hath fallen, and made a bridge of rock:
The gulf is deep below;
And, in a basin black and small,
Receives a lofty waterfall.

With staff in hand across the cleft
The challenger pursued his march;
And now, all eyes and feet, hath gained
The middle of the arch.
When list! he hears a piteous moan—
Again!—his heart within him dies—
His pulse is stopped, his breath is lost,
He totters, pallid as a ghost,
And, looking down, espies
A lamb, that in the pool is pent
Within that black and frightful rent.

The lamb had slipped into the stream,
And safe without a bruise or wound
The cataract had borne him down
Into the gulf profound.
His dam had seen him when he fell,
She saw him down the torrent borne;
And, while with all a mother's love
She from the lofty rocks above
Sent forth a cry forlorn,
The lamb, still swimming round and
round,
Made answer to that plaintive sound.

When he had learnt what thing it was,
That sent this rueful cry, I ween
The Boy recovered heart, and told
The sight which he had seen.
Both gladly now deferred their task;
Nor was there wanting other aid—
A Poet, one who loves the brooks
Far better than the sages' books,
By chance had thither strayed;
And there the helpless lamb he found
By those huge rocks encompassed round.

He drew it from the troubled pool,
And brought it forth into the light:
The Shepherds met him with his charge,
An unexpected sight!
Into their arms the lamb they took,
Whose life and limbs the flood had spared;
Then up the steep ascent they hied,
And placed him at his mother's side;
And gently did the Bard
Those idle Shepherd-boys upbraid,
And bade them better mind their trade.

XII

ANECDOTE FOR FATHERS

'Retine vim istam, falsa enim dicam, si coges.'
EUSEBIUS.

[Composed 1798.—Published 1798.]

I HAVE a boy of five years old;
His face is fair and fresh to see;
His limbs are cast in beauty's mould,
And dearly he loves me.

One morn we strolled on our dry walk, 5
Our quiet home all full in view,
And held such intermitted talk
As we are wont to do.

My thoughts on former pleasures ran;
I thought of Kilve's delightful shore, 10
Our pleasant home when spring began,
A long, long year before.

A day it was when I could bear
Some fond regrets to entertain;
With so much happiness to spare, 15
I could not feel a pain.

The green earth echoed to the feet
Of lambs that bounded through the glade,
From shade to sunshine, and as fleet
From sunshine back to shade. 20

Birds warbled round me—and each
trace
Of inward sadness had its charm;
Kilve, thought I, was a favoured place,
And so is Liswyn farm.

My boy beside me tripped, so slim 25
And graceful in his rustic dress!
And, as we talked, I questioned him,
In very idleness.

POEMS REFERRING TO

'Now tell me, had you rather be,'
I said, and took him by the arm, 30
'On Kilve's smooth shore, by the green
sea,
Or here at Liswyn farm?'

In careless mood he looked at me,
While still I held him by the arm,
And said, 'At Kilve I'd rather be 35
Than here at Liswyn farm.'

'Now, little Edward, say why so:
My little Edward, tell me why.'—
'I cannot tell, I do not know.'—
'Why, this is strange,' said I; 40

'For here are woods, hills smooth and
warm;
There surely must some reason be
Why you would change sweet Liswyn
farm
For Kilve by the green sea.'

At this my boy hung down his head, 45
He blushed with shame, nor made
reply;
And three times to the child I said,
'Why, Edward, tell me why?'

His head he raised—there was in sight,
It caught his eye, he saw it plain— 50
Upon the house-top, glittering bright,
A broad and gilded vane.

Then did the boy his tongue unlock,
And eased his mind with this reply:
'At Kilve there was no weather-cock; 55
And that's the reason why.'

O dearest, dearest boy! my heart
For better lore would seldom yearn,
Could I but teach the hundredth part
Of what from thee I learn. 60

XIII

RURAL ARCHITECTURE

[Composed (probably) 1800.—Published 1800.]

THERE'S George Fisher, Charles Fleming,
and Reginald Shore,
Three rosy-cheeked school-boys, the high-
est not more
Than the height of a counsellor's bag;
To the top of GREAT HOW¹ did it please
them to climb:
And there they built up, without mortar
or lime, 5
A Man on the peak of the Crag.

¹ GREAT HOW is a single and conspicuous hill,
which rises towards the foot of Thirlmere, on the
western side of the beautiful dale of Legberthwaite,
along the high road between Keswick and Ambleside.

They built him of stones gathered up as
they lay:
They built him and christened him all in
one day,
An urchin both vigorous and hale;
And so without scruple they called him
Ralph Jones. 10
Now Ralph is renowned for the length of
his bones;
The Magog of Legberthwaite dale.

Just half a week after, the wind sallied
forth,
And, in anger or merriment, out of the
north,
Coming on with a terrible pother, 15
From the peak of the crag blew the giant
away.
And what did these school-boys? The
very next day
They went and they built up another.

—Some little I've seen of blind bois-
terous works
By Christian disturbers more savage than
Turks, 20
Spirits busy to do and undo:
At remembrance whereof my blood some-
times will flag;
Then, light-hearted Boys, to the top of
the crag;
And I'll build up a giant with you.

XIV

THE PET-LAMB

A PASTORAL

[Composed 1800.—Published 1800.]

THE dew was falling fast, the stars began
to blink;
I heard a voice; it said, 'Drink, pretty
creature, drink!'
And, looking o'er the hedge, before me
I espied
A snow-white mountain-lamb with a
Maiden at its side.

Nor sheep nor kine were near; the lamb
was all alone, 5
And by a slender cord was tethered to a
stone;
With one knee on the grass did the little
Maiden kneel,
While to that mountain-lamb she gave
its evening meal.

The lamb, while from her hand he thus
his supper took,
Seemed to feast with head and ears; and
his tail with pleasure shook. 10
'Drink, pretty creature, drink,' she said
in such a tone
That I almost received her heart into my
OWN.

THE PERIOD OF CHILDHOOD

'Twas little Barbara Lewthwaite, a child
of beauty rare!
I watched them with delight, they were
a lovely pair.
Now with her empty can the Maiden
turned away: 15
But ere ten yards were gone her foot-
steps did she stay.

Right towards the lamb she looked; and
from a shady place
I unobserved could see the workings of
her face:
If Nature to her tongue could measured
numbers bring,
Thus, thought I, to her lamb that little
Maid might sing: 20

'What ails thee, young One? what? Why
pull so at thy cord?
Is it not well with thee? well both for bed
and board?
'Thy plot of grass is soft, and green as
grass can be;
Rest, little young One, rest; what is't
that aileth thee?

'What is it thou wouldst seek? What is
wanting to thy heart? 25
Thy limbs, are they not strong? And
beautiful thou art:
This grass is tender grass; these flowers
they have no peers;
And that green corn all day is rustling
in thy ears!

'If the sun be shining hot, do but stretch
thy woollen chain,
This beech is standing by, its covert thou
canst gain; 30
For rain and mountain-storms! the like
thou need'st not fear,
The rain and storm are things that
scarcely can come here.

'Rest, little young One, rest; thou hast
forgot the day
When my father found thee first in places
far away;
Many flocks were on the hills, but thou
wert owned by none, 35
And thy mother from thy side for ever-
more was gone.

'He took thee in his arms, and in pity
brought thee home:
A blessed day for thee! then whither
wouldst thou roam?
A faithful nurse thou hast; the dam that
did thee yearn
Upon the mountain-tops no kinder could
have been. 40

'Thou know'st that twice a day I have
brought thee in this can
Fresh water from the brook, as clear as
ever ran;
And twice in the day, when the ground
is wet with dew,
I bring thee draughts of milk, warm
milk it is and new.

'Thy limbs will shortly be twice as stout
as they are now, 45
Then I'll yoke thee to my cart like a pony
in the plough;
My playmate thou shalt be; and when
the wind is cold
Our hearth shall be thy bed, our house
shall be thy fold.

'It will not, will not rest!—Poor creature,
can it be
That 'tis thy mother's heart which is
working so in thee? 50
Things that I know not of belike to thee
are dear,
And dreams of things which thou canst
neither see nor hear.

'Alas, the mountain-tops that look so
green and fair!
I've heard of fearful winds and darkness
that come there;
The little brooks that seem all pastime
and all play, 55
When they are angry, roar like lions for
their prey.

'Here thou need'st not dread the raven in
the sky;
Night and day thou art safe,—our cottage
is hard by.
Why bleat so after me? Why pull so at
thy chain?
Sleep—and at break of day I will come
to thee again!' 60

—As homeward through the lane I went
with lazy feet,
This song to myself did I oftentimes
repeat;
And it seemed, as I retraced the ballad
line by line,
That but half of it was hers, and one half
of it was mine.

Again, and once again, did I repeat the
song; 65
'Nay,' said I, 'more than half to the
damsel must belong,
For she looked with such a look, and she
spake with such a tone,
That I almost received her heart into my
own.'

POEMS REFERRING TO

XX

TO H. C.

SIX YEARS OLD

[Composed 1802.—Published 1807.]

O THOU! whose fancies from afar are brought;

Who of thy words dost make a mock apparel,

And fittest to unutterable thought
The breeze-like motion and the self-born carol;

Thou faery voyager! that dost float
In such clear water, that thy boat
May rather seem

To brood on air than on an earthly stream;

Suspended in a stream as clear as sky,
Where earth and heaven do make one imagery;

O blessed vision! happy child!
Thou art so exquisitely wild,
I think of thee with many fears
For what may be thy lot in future years.

I thought of times when Pain might
be thy guest,

Lord of thy house and hospitality;
And Grief, uneasy lover! never rest
But when she sate within the touch of thee.
O too industrious folly!

O vain and causeless melancholy!
Nature will either end thee quite;
Or, lengthening out thy season of delight,
Preserve for thee, by individual right,
A young lamb's heart among the full-grown flocks.

What hast thou to do with sorrow,
Or the injuries of to-morrow?
Thou art a dew-drop, which the morn
brings forth,

Ill fitted to sustain unkindly shocks,
Or to be trailed along the soiling earth;
A gem that glitters while it lives,
And no forewarning gives;
But, at the touch of wrong, without a strife
Slips in a moment out of life.

XVI

INFLUENCE OF NATURAL OBJECTS

IN CALLING FORTH AND STRENGTHENING
THE IMAGINATION IN BOYHOOD AND
EARLY YOUTH

[Composed 1798-9.—Published in *The Friend*,
Dec. 28, 1809; ed. 1815.]

FROM AN UNPUBLISHED POEM

[This extract is reprinted from *The Friend*.]

WISDOM and Spirit of the universe!
Thou Soul, that art the Eternity of
thought!

And giv'st to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion! not in vain,
By day or star-light, thus from my first
dawn

Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human
soul;

Not with the mean and vulgar works
of Man;

But with high objects, with enduring
things,

With life and nature; purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,

And sanctifying by such discipline
Both pain and fear,—until we recognise
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.

Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed
to me

With stinted kindness. In November
days,

When vapours rolling down the valleys
made

A lonely scene more lonesome; among
woods

At noon; and 'mid the calm of summer
nights,

When, by the margin of the trembling
lake,

Beneath the gloomy hills, homeward I
went

In solitude, such intercourse was mine:
Mine was it in the fields both day and
night,

And by the waters, all the summer long.
And in the frosty season, when the sun 25
Was set, and, visible for many a mile,

The cottage-windows through the twilight
blazed,

I heeded not the summons: happy time
It was indeed for all of us; for me

It was a time of rapture! Clear and
loud

The village-clock tolled six—I wheeled
about,

Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home.—All shod
with steel

We hissed along the polished ice, in
games

Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures,—the resound-
ing horn,

The pack loud-chiming, and the hunted
hare.

So through the darkness and the cold we
flew,

And not a voice was idle: with the din
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud;

The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron; while far-distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound

Of melancholy, not unnoticed, while the
stars,

THE PERIOD OF CHILDHOOD

Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in
the west 45
The orange sky of evening died away.

Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideways, leaving the tumultuous
thrung,

To cut across the reflex of a star; 50
Image that, flying still before me, gleamed
Upon the glassy plain: and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the
wind,

And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness,
spinning still 55

The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me—even as if the earth had
rolled

With visible motion her diurnal round! 60
Behind me did they stretch in solemn
train,

Feebler and feebler, and I stood and
watched

Till all was tranquil as a summer sea.

XVII

THE LONGEST DAY

ADDRESSED TO MY DAUGHTER, DORA

[Composed 1817.—Published 1820.]

LET us quit the leafy arbour,
And the torrent murmuring by;
For the sun is in his harbour,
Weary of the open sky.

Evening now unbinds the fetters
Fashioned by the glowing light;
All that breathe are thankful debtors
To the harbinger of night.

Yet by some grave thoughts attended
Eve renews her calm career; 10
For the day that now is ended
Is the longest of the year.

Dora! sport, as now thou sportest,
On this platform, light and free;
Take thy bliss, while longest, shortest, 15
Are indifferent to thee!

Who would check the happy feeling
That inspires the linnets song?
Who would stop the swallow, wheeling
On her pinions swift and strong? 20

Yet, at this impressive season,
Words which tenderness can speak
From the truths of homely reason
Might exalt the loveliest cheek;

And, while shades to shades succeeding 25
Steal the landscape from the sight,
I would urge this moral pleading,
Last forerunner of 'Good night!'

SUMMER ebbs;—each day that follows
Is a reflux from on high, 30
Tending to the darksome hollows
Where the frosts of winter lie.

He who governs the creation,
In his providence, assigned
Such a gradual declination 35
To the life of human kind.

Yet we mark it not;—fruits redden,
Fresh flowers blow as flowers have blown,
And the heart is loath to deaden
Hopes that she so long hath known. 40

Be thou wiser, youthful Maiden!
And when thy decline shall come,
Let not flowers, or boughs fruit-laden,
Hide the knowledge of thy doom.

Now, even now, ere wrapped in slumber,
Fix thine eyes upon the sea 46
That absorbs time, space, and number;
Look thou to Eternity!

Follow thou the flowing river
On whose breast are thither borne 50
All deceived, and each deceiver,
Through the gates of night and morn;

Through the year's successive portals;
Through the bounds which many a star
Marks, not mindless of frail mortals, 55
When his light returns from far.

5 Thus when thou with Time hast travelled
Toward the mighty gulf of things,
And the mazy stream unravelled
With thy best imaginings; 60

10 Think, if thou on beauty leanest,
Think how pitiful that stay,
Did not virtue give the meanest
Charms superior to decay.

Duty, like a strict preceptor, 65
Sometimes frowns, or seems to frown;
Choose her thistle for thy sceptre,
While youth's roses are thy crown.

Grasp it,—if thou shrink and tremble,
Fairest damsel of the green, 70
Thou wilt lack the only symbol
That proclaims a genuine queen;

And ensures those palms of honour
Which selected spirits wear,
Bending low before the Donor, 75
Lord of heaven's unchanging year!

POEMS REFERRING TO

XVIII

THE NORMAN BOY

[Composed (?).—Published 1842.]

High on a broad unfertile tract of forest-
skirted Down,
Nor kept by Nature for herself, nor made
by man his own,
From home and company remote and
every playful joy,
Served, tending a few sheep and goats,
a ragged Norman Boy.

Him never saw I, nor the spot; but from
an English Dame,
Stranger to me and yet my friend, a
simple notice came,
With suit that I would speak in verse of
that sequestered child
Whom, one bleak winter's day, she met
upon the dreary Wild.

His flock, along the woodland's edge with
relics sprinkled o'er
Of last night's snow, beneath a sky threat-
ening the fall of more,
Where tufts of herbage tempted each,
were busy at their feed,
And the poor Boy was busier still, with
work of anxious heed.

There was he, where of branches rent and
withered and decayed,
For covert from the keen north wind, his
hands a hut had made.
A tiny tenement, forsooth, and frail, as
needs must be
A thing of such materials framed, by a
boulder such as he.

The hut stood finished by his pains, nor
seemingly lacked aught
That skill or means of his could add, but
the architect had wrought
Some limber twigs into a Cross, well-
shaped with fingers nice,
To be engrafted on the top of his small
edifice.

That Cross he now was fastening there,
as the surest power and best
For supplying all deficiencies, all wants
of the rude nest
In which, from burning heat, or tempest
driving far and wide,
The innocent Boy, else shelterless, his
lonely head must hide.

That Cross belike he also raised as a
standard for the true
And faithful service of his heart in the
worst that might ensue

Of hardship and distressful fear, amid the
houseless waste
Where he, in his poor self so weak, by
Providence was placed.

—Here, Lady! might I cease; but nay,
let us before we part
With this dear holy shepherd-boy breathe
a prayer of earnest heart,
That unto him, where'er shall lie his life's
appointed way,
The Cross, fixed in his soul, may prove an
all-sufficing stay.

XIX

THE POET'S DREAM

SEQUEL TO 'THE NORMAN BOY'

[Composed (?).—Published 1842.]

Just as those final words were penned,
the sun broke out in power,
And gladdened all things; but, as chanced,
within that very hour,
Air blackened, thunder growled, fire
flashed from clouds that hid the sky,
And for the Subject of my Verse I heaved
a pensive sigh.

Nor could my heart by second thoughts
from heaviness be cleared,
For bodied forth before my eyes the cross-
crowned hut appeared;
And while around it storm as fierce
seemed troubling earth and air,
I saw, within, the Norman Boy kneeling
alone in prayer.

The Child, as if the thunder's voice spake
with articulate call,
Bowed meekly in submissive fear, before
the Lord of All;
His lips were moving; and his eyes, up-
raised to sue for grace,
With soft illumination cheered the dim-
ness of that place.

How beautiful is holiness!—what wonder
if the sight,
Almost as vivid as a dream, produced a
dream at night?
It came with sleep and showed the Boy,
no cherub, not transformed,
But the poor ragged Thing whose ways
my human heart had warmed.

Me had the dream equipped with wings,
so I took him in my arms,
And lifted from the grassy floor, stilling
his faint alarms,
And bore him high through yielding air
my debt of love to pay,
By giving him, for both our sakes, an
hour of holiday.

THE PERIOD OF CHILDHOOD

- I whispered, 'Yet a little while, dear Child! thou art my own,
To show thee some delightful thing, in country or in town.
What shall it be? a mirthful throng? or that holy place and calm
St. Denis, filled with royal tombs, or the Church of Notre Dame?
- 'St. Ouen's golden Shrine? Or choose what else would please thee most 25
Of any wonder Normandy, or all proud France, can boast!'
'My Mother,' said the Boy, 'was born near to a blessed Tree,
The Chapel Oak of Allionville; good Angel, show it me!'
- On wings from broad and steadfast poise let loose by this reply,
For Allionville, o'er down and dale, away then did we fly; 30
O'er town and tower we fled, and fields in May's fresh verdure drest;
The wings they did not flag; the Child, though grave, was not deprest.
- But who shall show, to waking sense, the gleam of light that broke
Forth from his eyes, when first the Boy looked down on that huge oak,
For length of days so much revered, so famous where it stands 35
For twofold hallowing—Nature's care, and work of human hands?
- Strong as an Eagle with my charge I glided round and round
The wide-spread boughs, for view of door, window, and stair that wound
Gracefully up the gnarled trunk; nor left we unsurveyed
The pointed steeple peering forth from the centre of the shade. 40
- I lighted—opened with soft touch the chapel's iron door,
Past softly, leading in the Boy; and while from roof to floor,
From floor to roof, all round his eyes the Child with wonder cast,
Pleasure on pleasure crowded in, each livelier than the last.
- For, deftly framed within the trunk, the sanctuary showed, 45
By light of lamp and precious stones, that glimmered here, there glowed,
Shrine, Altar, Image, Offerings hung in sign of gratitude;
Sight that inspired accordant thoughts; and speech I thus renewed:
- 'Hither the Afflicted come, as thou hast heard thy Mother say,
And, kneeling, supplication make to our Lady de la Paix; 50
What mournful sighs have here been heard, and, when the voice was stopt
By sudden pangs; what bitter tears have on this pavement drop!
- 'Poor Shepherd of the naked Down, a favoured lot is thine,
Far happier lot, dear Boy, than brings full many to this shrine;
From body pains and pains of soul thou needest no release, 55
Thy hours as they flow on are spent, if not in joy in peace.
- 'Then offer up thy heart to God in thankfulness and praise,
Give to Him prayers, and many thoughts, in thy most busy days;
And in His sight the fragile Cross, on thy small hut, will be
Holy as that which long hath crowned the Chapel of this Tree; 60
- 'Holy as that far seen which crowns the sumptuous Church in Rome
Where thousands meet to worship God under a mighty Dome;
He sees the bending multitude, He hears the choral rites,
Yet, not the less, in children's hymns and lonely prayer delights.
- 'God for His service needeth not proud work of human skill; 65
They please Him best who labour most to do in peace His will:
So let us strive to live, and to our Spirits will be given
Such wings as, when our Saviour calls, shall bear us up to heaven.'
- The Boy no answer made by words, but, so earnest was his look,
Sleep fled, and with it fled the dream—recorded in this book, 70
Lest all that passed should melt away in silence from my mind,
As visions still more bright have done, and left no trace behind.
- But oh! that Country-man of thine, whose eye, loved Child, can see
A pledge of endless bliss in acts of early piety,
In verse, which to thy ear might come, would treat this simple theme, 75
Nor leave untold our happy flight in that adventurous dream.

POEMS ON THE PERIOD OF CHILDHOOD

Alas the dream, to thee, poor Boy! to
thee from whom it flowed,
Was nothing, scarcely can be aught, yet
'twas bounteously bestowed,
If I may dare to cherish hope that gentle
eyes will read
Not loth, and listening Little-ones, heart-
touched, their fancies feed.¹

XX

THE WESTMORELAND GIRL

TO MY GRANDCHILDREN

[Composed June 6, 1845.—Published 1845.]

PART I

SEEK who will delight in fable,
I shall tell you truth. A Lamb
Leapt from this steep bank to follow
'Cross the brook its thoughtless dam.

Far and wide on hill and valley
Rain had fallen, unceasing rain,
And the bleating mother's Young-one
Struggled with the flood in vain:

But, as chanced, a Cottage-maiden
(Ten years scarcely had she told)
Seeing, plunged into the torrent,
Clasped the Lamb and kept her hold.

Whirled adown the rocky channel,
Sinking, rising, on they go,
Peace and rest, as seems, before them
Only in the lake below.

Oh! it was a frightful current
Whose fierce wrath the Girl had braved;
Clap your hands with joy my Hearers,
Shout in triumph, both are saved;

Saved by courage that with danger
Grew, by strength the gift of love,
And belike a guardian angel
Came with succour from above.

PART II

Now, to a maturer Audience,
Let me speak of this brave Child
Left among her native mountains
With wild Nature to run wild.

So, unwatched by love maternal,
Mother's care no more her guide,
Fared this little bright-eyed Orphan
Even while at her father's side.

Spare your blame,—remembrance makes
him

Loth to rule by strict command;
Still upon his cheek are living
Touches of her infant hand,

¹ See Note, p. 699.

Dear caresses given in pity,
Sympathy that soothed his grief,
As the dying mother witnessed
To her thankful mind's relief.

Time passed on; the Child was happy,
Like a Spirit of air she moved,
Wayward, yet by all who knew her
For her tender heart beloved.

Scarcely less than sacred passions,
Bred in house, in grove, and field,
Link her with the inferior creatures,
Urge her powers their rights to shield.

Anglers, bent on reckless pastime,
Learn how she can feel alike
Both for tiny harmless minnow
And the fierce sharp-toothed pike.

Merciful protectress, kindling
Into anger or disdain;
Many a captive hath she rescued,
Others saved from lingering pain.

Listen yet awhile;—with patience
Hear the homely truths I tell,
She in Grasmere's old church-steeple
Tolled this day the passing bell.

Yes, the wild Girl of the mountains
To their echoes gave the sound,
Notice punctual as the minute,
Warning solemn and profound.

She, fulfilling her sire's office,
Rang alone the far-heard knell,
Tribute, by her hand, in sorrow,
Paid to One who loved her well.

When his spirit was departed,
On that service she went forth;
Nor will fail the like to render
When his corse is laid in earth.

What then wants the Child to temper,
In her breast, unruly fire,
To control the froward impulse
And restrain the vague desire?

Easily a pious training
And a steadfast outward power
Would supplant the weeds, and cherish
In their stead each opening flower.

Thus the fearless Lamb-deliv'rer,
Woman-grown, meek-hearted, sage,
May become a blest example
For her sex, of every age.

Watchful as a wheeling eagle,
Constant as a soaring lark,
Should the country need a heroine,
She might prove our Maid of Arc.

Leave that thought; and here be uttered
Prayer that Grace divine may raise
Her humane courageous spirit
Up to heaven, thro' peaceful ways

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

I

THE BROTHERS

[Composed (in or about) February, 1800.—Published 1800.]

'THESE Tourists, heaven preserve us!
needs must live
A profitable life: some glance along,
Rapid and gay, as if the earth were air,
And they were butterflies to wheel about
Long as the summer lasted: some, as
wise, 5
Perched on the forehead of a jutting crag,
Pencil in hand and book upon the knee,
Will look and scribble, scribble on and
look,
Until a man might travel twelve stout
miles,
Or reap an acre of his neighbour's corn. 10
But, for that moping Son of Idleness,
Why can he tarry *yonder*?—In our
church-yard
Is neither epitaph nor monument,
Tombstone nor name—only the turf we
tread
And a few natural graves.'

To Jane, his wife,
Thus spake the homely Priest of Enner-
dale, 16
It was a July evening; and he sate
Upon the long stone-seat beneath the
eaves
Of his old cottage,—as it chanced, that
day,
Employed in winter's work. Upon the
stone 20
His wife sate near him, teasing matted
wool,
While, from the twin cards toothed with
glittering wire,
He fed the spindle of his youngest child,
Who, in the open air, with due accord
Of busy hands and back-and-forward
steps, 25
Her large round wheel was turning. To-
wards the field
In which the Parish Chapel stood alone,
Girt round with a bare ring of mossy
wall,
While half an hour went by, the Priest
had sent
Many a long look of wonder: and at last,
Risen from his seat, beside the snow-
white ridge 31
Of carded wool which the old man had
piled

He laid his implements with gentle care,
Each in the other locked; and down the
path,
That from his cottage to the church-yard
led, 35
He took his way, impatient to accost
The Stranger, whom he saw still lingering
there.

'Twas one well known to him in former
days,
A Shepherd-lad; who ere his sixteenth
year
Had left that calling, tempted to entrust
His expectations to the fickle winds 41
And perilous waters; with the mariners
A fellow-mariner; and so had fared
Through twenty seasons; but he had been
reared 44
Among the mountains, and he in his
heart
Was half a shepherd on the stormy seas.
Oft in the piping shrouds had Leonard
heard
The tones of waterfalls, and inland sounds
Of caves and trees:—and when the regu-
lar wind
Between the tropics filled the steady sail,
And blew with the same breath through
days and weeks, 51
Lengthening invisibly its weary line
Along the cloudless Main, he, in those
hours
Of tiresome indolence, would often hang
Over the vessel's side, and gaze and gaze;
And, while the broad blue wave and
sparkling foam 56
Flashed round him images and hues that
wrought
In union with the employment of his
heart,
He, thus by feverish passion overcome,
Even with the organs of his bodily eye,
Below him, in the bosom of the deep, 61
Saw mountains; saw the forms of sheep
that grazed
On verdant hills—with dwellings among
trees,
And shepherds clad in the same country
grey
Which he himself had worn.¹

And now, at last,
From perils manifold, with some small
wealth 66

¹ This description of the Calenture is sketched from an imperfect recollection of an admirable one in prose, by Mr. Gilbert, author of the *Hurricane*.

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

Acquired by traffic 'mid the Indian Isles,
To his paternal home he is returned,
With a determined purpose to resume
The life he had lived there; both for the
sake 70

Of many darling pleasures, and the love
Which to an only brother he has borne
In all his hardships, since that happy
time

When, whether it blew foul or fair, they
two

Were brother-shepherds on their native
hills. 75

—They were the last of all their race:
and now,

When Leonard had approached his home,
his heart

Failed in him; and, not venturing to
enquire

Tidings of one so long and dearly loved,
He to the solitary church-yard turned; so
That, as he knew in what particular spot
His family were laid, he thence might
learn

If still his Brother lived, or to the file
Another grave was added.—He had found
Another grave,—near which a full half-
hour 85

He had remained; but, as he gazed, there
grew

Such a confusion in his memory,
That he began to doubt; and even to hope
That he had seen this heap of turf be-
fore,—

That it was not another grave; but one 90
He had forgotten. He had lost his path,
As up the vale, that afternoon, he walked
Through fields which once had been well
known to him:

And oh what joy this recollection now
Sent to his heart! he lifted up his eyes, 95
And, looking round, imagined that he saw
Strange alteration wrought on every side
Among the woods and fields, and that the
rocks,

And everlasting hills themselves were
changed.

By this the Priest, who down the field
had come, 100

Unseen by Leonard, at the church-yard
gate

Stopped short,—and thence, at leisure,
limb by limb

Perused him with a gay complacency.

Ay, thought the Vicar, smiling to himself,
'Tis one of those who needs must leave
the path 105

Of the world's business to go wild alone:
His arms have a perpetual holiday;

The happy man will creep about the
fields,

Following his fancies by the hour, to
bring

Tears down his cheek, or solitary smiles
Into his face, until the setting sun 111
Write fool upon his forehead.—Planted
thus

Beneath a shed that over-arched the gate
Of this rude church-yard, till the stars
appeared

The good Man might have communed
with himself, 115

But that the Stranger, who had left the
grave,

Approached; he recognised the Priest at
once,

And, after greetings interchanged, and
given

By Leonard to the Vicar as to one
Unknown to him, this dialogue ensued,

Leonard. You live, Sir, in these dales,
a quiet life: 121

Your years make up one peaceful family;
And who would grieve and fret, if, wel-
come come

And welcome gone, they are so like each
other,

They cannot be remembered? Scarce a
funeral 125

Comes to this church-yard once in eighteen
months;

And yet, some changes must take place
among you:

And you, who dwell here, even among
these rocks,

Can trace the finger of mortality,
And see, that with our threescore years
and ten 130

We are not all that perish.—I re-
member,

(For many years ago I passed this road)
There was a foot-way all along the
fields

By the brook-side—'tis gone—and that
dark cleft!

To me it does not seem to wear the
face 135

Which then it had!

Priest. Nay, Sir, for aught I know,
That chasm is much the same—

Leonard. But, surely, yonder—

Priest. Ay, there, indeed, your memory
is a friend

That does not play you false.—On that
tall pike

(It is the loneliest place of all these
hills) 140

There were two springs which bubbled
side by side,

As if they had been made that they might
be

Companions for each other: the huge
crag

Was rent with lightning—one hath dis-
appeared;

The other, left behind, is flowing still. 145
For accidents and changes such as these,

THE BROTHERS

We want not store of them;—a water-
spout
Will bring down half a mountain; what
a feast

For folks that wander up and down like
you,

To see an acre's breadth of that wide
cliff 150

One roaring cataract! a sharp May-storm
Will come with loads of January snow,
And in one night send twenty score of
sheep

To feed the ravens; or a shepherd dies
By some untoward death among the
rocks: 155

The ice breaks up and sweeps away a
bridge;

A wood is felled:—and then for our own
homes!

A child is born or christened, a field
ploughed,

A daughter sent to service, a web spun,
The old house-clock is decked with a new
face; 160

And hence, so far from wanting facts or
dates

To chronicle the time, we all have here
A pair of diaries,—one serving, Sir,
For the whole dale, and one for each fire-
side—

Yours was a stranger's judgment: for
historians, 165

Commend me to these valleys!

Leonard. Yet your Church-yard
Seems, if such freedom may be used with
you,

To say that you are heedless of the past:
An orphan could not find his mother's
grave:

Here's neither head nor foot-stone, plate
of brass, 170

Cross-bones nor skull,—type of our
earthly state

Nor emblem of our hopes: the dead man's
home

Is but a fellow to that pasture-field.

Priest. Why, there, Sir, is a thought
that's new to me!

The stone-cutters, 'tis true, might beg
their bread 175

If every English church-yard were like
ours;

Yet your conclusion wanders from the
truth:

We have no need of names and epitaphs;
We talk about the dead by our fire-sides.

And then, for our immortal part! we
want 180

No symbols, Sir, to tell us that plain tale:
The thought of death sits easy on the man
Who has been born and dies among the
mountains.

Leonard. Your Dalesmen, then, do in
each other's thoughts

Possess a kind of second life: no doubt 185
You, Sir, could help me to the history
Of half these graves?

Priest. For eight-score winters past,
With what I've witnessed, and with what
I've heard,

Perhaps I might; and, on a winter-
evening,

If you were seated at my chimney's nook,
By turning o'er these hillocks one by one,
We two could travel, Sir, through a
strange round; 192

Yet all in the broad highway of the world.
Now there's a grave—your foot is half
upon it,—

It looks just like the rest; and yet that
man 195

Died broken-hearted.

Leonard. 'Tis a common case.
We'll take another: who is he that lies
Beneath yon ridge, the last of those three
graves?

It touches on that piece of native rock
Left in the church-yard wall.

Priest. That's Walter Ewbank. 200
He had as white a head and fresh a cheek
As ever were produced by youth and age
Engendering in the blood of hale four-
score.

Through five long generations had the
heart

Of Walter's forefathers o'erflowed the
bounds 205

Of their inheritance, that single cottage—
You see it yonder! and those few green
fields.

They toiled and wrought, and still, from
sire to son,

Each struggled, and each yielded as be-
fore

A little—yet a little,—and old Walter, 210
They left to him the family heart, and
land

With other burthens than the crop it
bore.

Year after year the old man still kept up
A cheerful mind,—and buffeted with bond,
Interest, and mortgages; at last he
sank, 215

And went into his grave before his time.

Poor Walter! whether it was care that
spurred him

God only knows, but to the very last
He had the lightest foot in Ennerdale:

His pace was never that of an old
man: 220

I almost see him tripping down the path
With his two grandsons after him:—but
you,

Unless our Landlord be your host to-
night,

Have far to travel,—and on these rough
paths 224

Even in the longest day of midsummer—

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

Leonard. But those two Orphans!

Priest. Orphans!—Such they were—
Yet not while Walter lived:—for, though
their parents

Lay buried side by side as now they lie,
The old man was a father to the boys,
Two fathers in one father: and if tears,
Shed when he talked of them where they
were not, ²³¹

And hauntings from the infirmity of love,
Are aught of what makes up a mother's
heart,

This old Man, in the day of his old age,
Was half a mother to them.—If you weep,
Sir, ²³⁵

To hear a stranger talking about strangers,
Heaven bless you when you are among
your kindred!

Ay—you may turn that way—it is a grave
Which will bear looking at.

Leonard. These boys—I hope
They loved this good old Man?—

Priest. They did—and truly: ²⁴⁰
But that was what we almost overlooked,
They were such darlings of each other.

Yes,
Though from the cradle they had lived
with Walter,

The only kinsman near them, and though he
Inclined to both by reason of his age, ²⁴⁵
With a more fond, familiar, tenderness;
They, notwithstanding, had much love to
spare,

And it all went into each other's hearts.
Leonard, the elder by just eighteen
months,

Was two years taller: 'twas a joy to see,
To hear, to meet them!—From their house
the school ²⁵¹

Is distant three short miles, and in the
time

Of storm and thaw, when every water-
course

And unbridged stream, such as you may
have noticed

Crossing our roads at every hundred steps,
Was swoln into a noisy rivulet, ²⁵⁶
Would *Leonard* then, when elder boys
remained

At home, go staggering through the slip-
pery fords,

Bearing his brother on his back. I have
seen him,

On windy days, in one of those stray
brooks, ²⁶⁰

Ay, more than once I have seen him, mid-
leg deep,

Their two books lying both on a dry stone,
Upon the hither side: and once I said,

As I remember, looking round these rocks
And hills on which we all of us were
born, ²⁶⁵

That God who made the great book of
the world

Would bless such piety—

Leonard. It may be then—
Priest. Never did worthier lads break
English bread;

The very brightest Sunday Autumn saw,
With all its mealy clusters of ripe nuts,
Could never keep those boys away from
church, ²⁷¹

Or tempt them to an hour of sabbath
breach.

Leonard and *James*! I warrant, every
corner

Among these rocks, and every hollow
place

That venturous foot could reach, to one
or both ²⁷⁵

Was known as well as to the flowers that
grow there.

Like roe-bucks they went bounding o'er
the hills;

They played like two young ravens on the
craggs:

Then they could write, ay, and speak too,
as well

As many of their betters—and for *Leonard*!
The very night before he went away, ²⁸¹

In my own house I put into his hand
A Bible, and I'd wager house and field

That, if he be alive, he has it yet.

Leonard. It seems, these Brothers have
not lived to be ²⁸⁵

A comfort to each other—
Priest. That they might

Live to such end is what both old and
young

In this our valley all of us have wished,
And what, for my part, I have often
prayed:

But *Leonard*—
Leonard. Then *James* still is left among
you! ²⁹⁰

Priest. 'Tis of the elder brother I am
speaking;

They had an uncle;—he was at that time
A thriving man, and trafficked on the seas:

And, but for that same uncle, to this hour
Leonard had never handled rope or
shroud: ²⁹⁵

For the boy loved the life which we lead
here;

And though of unripe years, a stripling
only,

His soul was knit to this his native soil.
But, as I said, old *Walter* was too weak

To strive with such a torrent; when he
died, ³⁰⁰

The estate and house were sold; and all
their sheep,

A pretty flock, and which, for aught I
know,

Had clothed the Ewbanks for a thousand
years:—

Well—all was gone, and they were desti-
tute,

THE BROTHERS

And Leonard, chiefly for his Brother's
sake, ³⁰⁵
Resolved to try his fortune on the seas.
Twelve years are past since we had tidings
from him.

If there were one among us who had heard
That Leonard Ewbank was come home
again,

From the Great Gavel,¹ down by Leeza's
banks, ³¹⁰

And down the Enna, far as Egremont.
The day would be a joyous festival;
And those two bells of ours, which there
you see—

Hanging in the open air—but, O good
Sir!

This is sad talk—they'll never sound for
him— ³¹⁵

Living or dead.—When last we heard of
him,

He was in slavery among the Moors
Upon the Barbary coast.—'Twas not a
little

That would bring down his spirit; and no
doubt,

Before it ended in his death, the Youth ³²⁰
Was sadly crossed.—Poor Leonard! when
we parted,

He took me by the hand, and said to me,
If e'er he should grow rich, he would
return,

To live in peace upon his father's land,
And lay his bones among us.

Leonard. If that day ³²⁵
Should come, 'twould needs be a glad day
for him;

He would himself, no doubt, be happy
then

As any that should meet him—
Priest. Happy! Sir—

Leonard. You said his kindred all were
in their graves,

And that he had one Brother—
Priest. That is but ³³⁰

A fellow-tale of sorrow. From his youth
James, though not sickly, yet was delicate;
And Leonard being always by his side
Had done so many offices about him,
That, though he was not of a timid
nature, ³³⁵

Yet still the spirit of a mountain-boy
In him was somewhat checked; and, when
his Brother

Was gone to sea, and he was left alone,
The little colour that he had was soon
Stolen from his cheek; he drooped, and

pined, and pined— ³⁴⁰
Leonard. But these are all the graves of
full-grown men!

Priest. Ay, Sir, that passed away: we
took him to us;

He was the child of all the dale—he lived
Three months with one, and six months
with another;

And wanted neither food, nor clothes,
nor love: ³⁴⁵

And many, many happy days were his.
But, whether blithe or sad, 'tis my belief

His absent Brother still was at his heart.
And, when he dwelt beneath our roof, we
found

(A practice t'ill this time unknown to
him) ³⁵⁰

That often, rising from his bed at night,
He in his sleep would walk about, and
sleeping

He sought his brother Leonard.—You
are moved!

Forgive me, Sir: before I spoke to you,
I judged you most unkindly.

Leonard. But this Youth, ³⁵⁵
How did he die at last?

Priest. One sweet May-morning,
(It will be twelve years since when Spring
returns)

He had gone forth among the new-
dropped lambs,

With two or three companions, whom
their course ³⁵⁹

Of occupation led from height to height
Under a cloudless sun—till he, at length,
Through weariness, or, haply, to indulge
The humour of the moment, lagged be-
hind.

You see yon precipice;—it wears the shape
Of a vast building made of many crags;

And in the midst is one particular
rock ³⁶⁶

That rises like a column from the vale,
Whence by our shepherds it is called THE

PILLAR.
Upon its æry summit crowned with

heath,
The loiterer, not unnoticed by his com-
rades, ³⁷⁰

Lay stretched at ease; but, passing by
the place

On their return, they found that he was
gone.

No ill was feared; till one of them by
chance

Entering, when evening was far spent, the
house

Which at that time was James's home,
there learned ³⁷⁵

That nobody had seen him all that day:
The morning came, and still he was un-
heard of:

The neighbours were alarmed, and to the
brook

¹ The Great Gavel, so called, I imagine, from its resemblance to the gable end of a house, is one of the highest of the Cumberland mountains. It stands at the head of the several vales of Ennerdale, Wastdale and Borrowdale.

The Leeza is a river which flows into the Lake of Ennerdale: on issuing from the Lake, it changes its name, and is called the End, Eyne, or Enna. It falls into the sea a little below Egremont.

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

Some hastened; some ran to the lake: That Leonard would partake his homely
ere noon fare:

They found him at the foot of that same rock The other thanked him with an earnest
380 voice;

Dead, and with mangled limbs. The third But added, that, the evening being calm,
day after He would pursue his journey. So they
I buried him, poor Youth, and there he parted.

Leonard. And that then is his grave!—
Before his death

You say that he saw many happy years? That overhung the road: he there stopped
short,

Priest. Ay, that he did—

Leonard. And all went well with him?— And, sitting down beneath the trees,
reviewed 420

Priest. If he had one, the Youth had All that the Priest had said: his early
twenty homes. 386 years

Leonard. And you believe, then, that Were with him:—his long absence, che-
his mind was easy?— rished hopes,

Priest. Yes, long before he died, he And thoughts which had been his an hour
found that time before,

Is a true friend to sorrow; and, unless All pressed on him with such a weight,
His thoughts were turned on Leonard's that now,

luckless fortune, 390 This vale, where he had been so happy,
He talked about him with a cheerful love. seemed 425

Leonard. He could not come to an un- A place in which he could not bear to
hallowed end! live:

Priest. Nay, God forbid!—You recollect So he relinquished all his purposes.
I mentioned He travelled back to Egremont: and
thence,

A habit which disquietude and grief That night, he wrote a letter to the Priest,
Had brought upon him; and we all con- Reminding him of what had passed be-
jectured 395 tween them; 430

That, as the day was warm, he had lain And adding, with a hope to be forgiven,
down That it was from the weakness of his
heart

On the soft heath,—and, waiting for his He had not dared to tell him who he was.
comrades, This done, he went on shipboard, and is
now

He there had fallen asleep; that in his A seaman, a grey-headed Mariner. 435

He to the margin of the precipice

Had walked, and from the summit had fallen headlong: 400

And so no doubt he perished. When the Youth

Fell, in his hand he must have grasped, we think,

His shepherd's staff; for on that Pillar of rock

It had been caught mid-way; and there for years

It hung;—and mouldered there.

The Priest here ended—

The Stranger would have thanked him, but he felt 406

A gushing from his heart, that took away The power of speech. Both left the spot
in silence;

And Leonard, when they reached the church-yard gate,

As the Priest lifted up the latch, turned round,— 410

And, looking at the grave, he said, 'My Brother!'

The Vicar did not hear the words: and now He pointed towards his dwelling-place,
entreating

It was not long ere Leonard reached a grove

That overhung the road: he there stopped short,

And, sitting down beneath the trees, reviewed 420

All that the Priest had said: his early years

Were with him:—his long absence, che- rished hopes,

And thoughts which had been his an hour before,

All pressed on him with such a weight, that now,

This vale, where he had been so happy, seemed 425

A place in which he could not bear to live:

So he relinquished all his purposes. He travelled back to Egremont: and
thence,

That night, he wrote a letter to the Priest, Reminding him of what had passed be-
tween them; 430

And adding, with a hope to be forgiven, That it was from the weakness of his
heart

He had not dared to tell him who he was. This done, he went on shipboard, and is
now

A seaman, a grey-headed Mariner. 435

II

ARTEGAL AND ELIDURE

(SEE THE CHRONICLE OF GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH, AND MILTON'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND)

[Composed 1815.—Published 1820.]

WHERE be the temples which in Britain's Isle,

For his paternal Gods, the Trojan raised? Gone like a morning dream, or like a pile
Of clouds that in cerulean ether blazed!

Ere Julius landed on her white-cliffed shore, 5

They sank, delivered o'er To fatal dissolution; and, I ween,

No vestige then was left that such had ever been.

Nathless, a British record (long concealed In old Armorica, whose secret springs 10

No Gothic conqueror ever drank) revealed The marvellous current of forgotten things;

ARTEGAL AND ELIDURE

How Brutus came, by oracles impelled,
And Albion's giants quelled,
A brood whom no civility could melt, 15
'Who never tasted grace, and goodness
ne'er had felt.'

By brave Corineus aided, he subdued,
And rooted out the intolerable kind;
And this too-long-polluted land imbued
With goodly arts and usages refined; 20
Whence golden harvests, cities, warlike
towers,
And pleasure's sumptuous bowers;
Whence all the fixed delights of house
and home,
Friendships that will not break, and love
that cannot roam.

O, happy Britain! region all too fair 25
For self-delighting fancy to endure
That silence only should inhabit there,
Wild beasts, or uncouth savages impure!
But, intermingled with the generous seed,
Grew many a poisonous weed; 30
Thus fares it still with all that takes its
birth
From human care, or grows upon the
breast of earth.

Hence, and how soon! that war of ven-
geance waged
By Guendolen against her faithless lord;
Till she, in jealous fury unassuaged, 35
Had slain his paramour with ruthless
sword:
Then into Severn hideously defiled,
She flung her blameless child,
Sabrina,—vowing that the stream should
bear
That name through every age, her hatred
to declare. 40

So speaks the Chronicle, and tells of Lear
By his ungrateful daughters turned adrift.
Ye lightnings, hear his voice!—they can-
not hear,
Nor can the winds restore his simple gift.
But One there is, a Child of nature meek,
Who comes her Sire to seek; 46
And he, recovering sense, upon her breast
Leans smilingly, and sinks into a perfect
rest.

There too we read of Spenser's fairy
themes,
And those that Milton loved in youthful
years; 50
The sage enchanter Merlin's subtle
schemes;
The feats of Arthur and his knightly peers;
Of Arthur,—who, to upper light restored,
With that terrific sword
Which yet he brandishes for future war,
Shall lift his country's fame above the
polar star! 56

What wonder, then, in such ample field
Of old tradition, one particular flower
Doth seemingly in vain its fragrance yield,
And bloom unnoticed even to this late
hour? 60

Now, gentle Muses, your assistance grant,
While I this flower transplant
Into a garden stored with Poesy;
Where flowers and herbs unite, and haply
some weeds be,
That, wanting not wild grace, are from
all mischief free! 65

A KING more worthy of respect and love
Than wise Gorbonian ruled not in his day;
And grateful Britain prospered far above
All neighbouring countries through his
righteous sway;
He poured rewards and honours on the
good; 70
The oppressor he withstood;
And while he served the Gods with reve-
rence due,
Fields smiled, and temples rose, and towns
and cities grew.

He died, whom Artegael succeeds—his son;
But how unworthy of that sire was he! 75
A hopeful reign, auspiciously begun,
Was darkened soon by foul iniquity.
From crime to crime he mounted, till at
length
The nobles leagued their strength
With a vexed people, and the tyrant
chased; 80
And on the vacant throne his worthier
Brother placed.

From realm to realm the humbled Exile
went,
Suppliant for aid his kingdom to regain;
In many a court, and many a warrior's
tent,
He urged his persevering suit in vain. 85
Him, in whose wretched heart ambition
failed,
Dire poverty assailed;
And, tired with slights his pride no more
could brook,
He towards his native country cast a
longing look.

Fair blew the wished-for wind—the
voyage sped; 90
He landed; and by many dangers scared,
'Poorly provided, poorly followed,'
To Calaterium's forest he repaired.
How changed from him who, born to
highest place,
Had swayed the royal mace, 95
Flattered and feared, despised yet deified,
In Troynovant, his seat by silver Thames's
side!

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

From that wild region where the crown-
less king

Lay in concealment with his scanty train,
Supporting life by water from the spring,
And such chance food as outlaws can
obtain, 101

Unto the few whom he esteems his friends
A messenger he sends;

And from their secret loyalty requires
Shelter and daily bread,—the sum of his
desires. 105

While he the issue waits, at early morn
Wandering by stealth abroad, he chanced
to hear

A startling outcry made by hound and
horn,
From which the tusky wild boar flies in
fear;

And, scouring toward him o'er the grassy
plain, 110

Behold the hunter train!

He bids his little company advance
With seeming unconcern and steady coun-
tenance.

The royal Elidure, who leads the chase,
Hath checked his foaming courser:—can
it be! 115

Methinks that I should recognise that face,
Though much disguised by long adver-
sity!

He gazed rejoicing, and again he gazed,
Confounded and amazed—

'It is the king, my brother!' and, by
sound 120

Of his own voice confirmed, he leaps upon
the ground.

Long, strict, and tender was the embrace
he gave,

Feebly returned by daunted Artegal;
Whose natural affection doubts enslave,
And apprehensions dark and criminal. 125

Loth to restrain the moving interview,
The attendant lords withdrew;

And, while they stood upon the plain
apart,

Thus Elidure, by words, relieved his
struggling heart.

'By heavenly Powers conducted, we have
met; 130

—O Brother! to my knowledge lost so
long,

But neither lost to love, nor to regret,
Nor to my wishes lost;—forgive the
wrong,

(Such it may seem) if I thy crown have
borne,

Thy royal mantle worn: 135

I was their natural guardian; and 'tis just
That now I should restore what hath been
held in trust.'

A while the astonished Artegal stood mute,
Then thus exclaimed: 'To me, of titles
shorn,

And stripped of power! me, feeble, desti-
tute, 140

To me a kingdom! spare the bitter scorn:
If justice ruled the breast of foreign kings,

Then, on the wide-spread wings

Of war, had I returned to claim my right;

This will I here avow, not dreading thy
despite.' 145

'I do not blame thee,' Elidure replied;
'But, if my looks did with my words agree,

I should at once be trusted, not defied,
And thou from all disquietude be free.

May the unsullied Goddess of the chase,

Who to this blessed place 151

At this blest moment led me, if I speak

With insincere intent, on me her ven-
geance wreak!

'Were this same spear, which in my hand
I grasp,

The British sceptre, here would I to thee
The symbol yield; and would undo this

clasp, 156

If it confined the robe of sovereignty.

Odious to me the pomp of regal court,

And joyless sylvan sport,

While thou art roving, wretched and
forlorn, 160

Thy couch the dewy earth, thy roof the
forest thorn!'

Then Artegal thus spake: 'I only sought
Within this realm a place of safe retreat;

Beware of rousing an ambitious thought;

Beware of kindling hopes for me un-
meet! 165

Thou art reputed wise, but in my mind

Art pitifully blind:

Full soon this generous purpose thou

may'st rue,

When that which has been done no wishes
can undo.

'Who, when a crown is fixed upon his head,
Would balance claim with claim, and

right with right? 171

But thou—I know not how inspired, how
led—

Wouldst change the course of things in
all men's sight!

And this for one who cannot imitate

Thy virtue, who may hate: 175

For, if, by such strange sacrifice restored,

He reign, thou still must be his king, and
sovereign lord;

'Lifted in magnanimity above
Aught that my feeble nature could per-
form,

Or even conceive; surpassing me in love

Far as in power the eagle doth the worm:

ARTEGAL AND ELIDURE

I, Brother! only should be king in name,
And govern to my shame;
A shadow in a hated land, while all
Of glad or willing service to thy share
would fall.' 185

'Believe it not,' said Elidure; 'respect
Awaits on virtuous life, and ever most
Attends on goodness with dominion
decked,
Which stands the universal empire's
boast;
This can thy own experience testify: 190
Nor shall thy foes deny
That, in the gracious opening of thy reign,
Our father's spirit seemed in thee to
breathe again.

'And what if o'er that bright unbosoming
Clouds of disgrace and envious fortune
past! 195
Have we not seen the glories of the spring
By veil of noontide darkness overcast?
The frith that glittered like a warrior's
shield,
The sky, the gay green field,
Are vanished; gladness ceases in the
groves, 200
And trepidation strikes the blackened
mountain-coves.

'But is that gloom dissolved? how passing
clear
Seems the wide world, far brighter than
before!
Even so thy latent worth will re-appear,
Gladdening the people's heart from shore
to shore; 205
For youthful faults ripe virtues shall
atone;
Re-seated on thy throne,
Proof shalt thou furnish that misfortune,
pain,
And sorrow, have confirmed thy native
right to reign.

'But, not to overlook what thou may'st
know, 210
Thy enemies are neither weak nor few;
And circumspect must be our course, and
slow,
Or from my purpose ruin may ensue.
Dismiss thy followers;—let them calmly
wait
Such change in thy estate 215
As I already have in thought devised;
And which, with caution due, may soon
be realized.'

The Story tells what courses were pur-
sued,
Until king Elidure, with full consent
Of all his peers, before the multitude, 220
Rose,—and, to consummate this just in-
tent,

Did place upon his brother's head the
crown,
Relinquished by his own;
Then to his people cried, 'Receive your
lord,
Gorbonian's first-born son, your rightful
king restored!' 225

The people answered with a loud acclaim:
Yet more;—heart-smitten by the heroic
deed,
The reinstated Artegale became
Earth's noblest penitent; from bondage
freed
Of vice—thenceforth unable to subvert
Or shake his high desert. 231
Long did he reign; and, when he died,
the tear
Of universal grief bedewed his honoured
bier.

Thus was a Brother by a Brother saved;
With whom a crown (temptation that
bath set 235
Discord in hearts of men till they have
braved
Their nearest kin with deadly purpose
met)
'Gainst duty weighed, and faithful love,
did seem
A thing of no esteem;
And, from this triumph of affection pure,
He bore the lasting name of 'pious Eli-
dure!' 241

III

TO A BUTTERFLY

[Composed April 20, 1802.—Published 1807.]

I've watched you now a full half-hour,
Self-poised upon that yellow flower;
And, little Butterfly! indeed
I know not if you sleep or feed.
How motionless!—not frozen seas 5
More motionless! and then
What joy awaits you, when the breeze
Hath found you out among the trees,
And calls you forth again!

This plot of orchard-ground is ours; 10
My trees they are, my Sister's flowers;
Here rest your wings when they are weary;
Here lodge as in a sanctuary!
Come often to us, fear no wrong;
Sit near us on the bough! 15
We'll talk of sunshine and of song,
And summer days, when we were young;
Sweet childish days, that were as long
As twenty days are now.

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

IV

A FAREWELL

[Finished May 29, 1802.—Published 1815.]

FAREWELL, thou little Nook of mountain-ground,
Thou rocky corner in the lowest stair
Of that magnificent temple which doth bound

One side of our whole vale with grandeur rare;

Sweet garden-orchard, eminently fair, 5
The loveliest spot that man hath ever found,

Farewell!—we leave thee to Heaven's peaceful care,

Thee, and the Cottage which thou dost surround.

Our boat is safely anchored by the shore,
And there will safely ride when we are gone; 10

The flowering shrubs that deck our humble door

Will prosper, though untended and alone:
Fields, goods, and far-off chattels we have none:

These narrow bounds contain our private store

Of things earth makes, and sun doth shine upon; 15

Here are they in our sight—we have no more.

Sunshine and shower be with you, bud and bell!

For two months now in vain we shall be sought;

We leave you here in solitude to dwell
With these our latest gifts of tender thought; 20

Thou, like the morning, in thy saffron coat,

Bright gowan, and marsh-marigold, farewell!

Whom from the borders of the Lake we brought,

And placed together near our rocky Well.

We go for One to whom ye will be dear;
And she will prize this Bower, this Indian shed, 26

Our own contrivance, Building without peer!

—A gentle Maid, whose heart is lowly bred,

Whose pleasures are in wild fields gathered,

With joyousness, and with a thoughtful cheer, 30

Will come to you; to you herself will wed;

And love the blessed life that we lead here.

Dear Spot! which we have watched with tender heed,

Bringing thee chosen plants and blossoms blown

Among the distant mountains, flower and weed, 35

Which thou hast taken to thee as thy own,

Making all kindness registered and known;

Thou for our sakes, though Nature's child indeed,

Fair in thyself and beautiful alone,
Hast taken gifts which thou dost little need. 40

And O most constant, yet most fickle Place,

That hast thy wayward moods, as thou dost show

To them who look not daily on thy face;

Who, being loved, in love no bounds dost know,

And say'st, when we forsake thee, 'Let them go!' 45

Thou easy-hearted Thing, with thy wild race

Of weeds and flowers, till we return be slow,

And travel with the year at a soft pace.

Help us to tell Her tales of years gone by,

And this sweet spring, the best beloved and best; 50

Joy will be flown in its mortality;
Something must stay to tell us of the rest.

Here, thronged with primroses, the steep rock's breast

Glittered at evening like a starry sky;

And in this bush our sparrow built her nest, 55

Of which I sang one song that will not die.

O happy Garden! whose seclusion deep
Hath been so friendly to industrious hours;

And to soft slumbers, that did gently steep

Our spirits, carrying with them dreams of flowers, 60

And wild notes warbled among leafy bowers;

Two burning months let summer over-leap,

And, coming back with Her who will be ours,

Into thy bosom we again shall creep.

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

V

STANZAS

WRITTEN IN MY POCKET-COPY OF
THOMSON'S 'CASTLE OF INDOLENCE'

[Composed May 9-11, 1802.—Published 1815.]

WITHIN our happy Castle there dwelt One
Whom without blame I may not over-
look;

For never sun on living creature shone
Who more devout enjoyment with us
took:

Here on his hours he hung as on a book, 5
On his own time here would he float
away,

As doth a fly upon a summer brook;
But go to-morrow, or belike to-day,
Seek for him,—he is fled; and whither
none can say.

Thus often would he leave our peaceful
home, 10
And find elsewhere his business or de-
light;

Out of our Valley's limits did he roam:
Full many a time, upon a stormy night,
His voice came to us from the neighbour-
ing height:

Oft could we see him driving full in view
At mid-day when the sun was shining
bright; 16

What ill was on him, what he had to do,
A mighty wonder bred among our quiet
crew.

Ah! piteous sight it was to see this Man
When he came back to us, a withered
flower,— 20

Or like a sinful creature, pale and wan.
Down would he sit; and without strength
or power

Look at the common grass from hour to
hour:

And oftentimes, how long I fear to say,
Where apple-trees in blossom made a
bower, 25

Retired in that sunshiny shade he lay;
And, like a naked Indian, slept himself
away.

Great wonder to our gentle tribe it was
Whenever from our Valley he withdrew;
For happier soul no living creature has 30
Than he had, being here the long day
through.

Some thought he was a lover, and did woo:
Some thought far worse of him, and
judged him wrong;

But verse was what he had been wedded to;
And his own mind did like a tempest
strong 35

Come to him thus, and drove the weary
Wight along.

With him there often walked in friendly
guise,

Or lay upon the moss by brook or tree,
A noticeable Man with large grey eyes,
And a pale face that seemed undoubt-
edly 40

As if a blooming face it ought to be;
Heavy his low-hung lip did oft appear,
Deprest by weight of musing Phantasy;
Profound his forehead was, though not
severe;

Yet some did think that he had little
business here: 45

Sweet heaven forefend! his was a lawful
right;

Noisy he was, and gamesome as a boy;
His limbs would toss about him with
delight,

Like branches when strong winds the
trees annoy. 49

Nor lacked his calmer hours device or toy
To banish listlessness and irksome care;
He would have taught you how you might
employ

Yourself; and many did to him repair,—
And certes not in vain; he had inventions
rare.

Expedients, too, of simplest sort he tried:
Long blades of grass, plucked round him
as he lay, 56

Made, to his ear attentively applied,
A pipe on which the wind would deftly
play;

Glasses he had, that little things display,
The beetle panoplied in gems and gold, 60
A mailed angel on a battle-day;
The mysteries that cups of flowers enfold,
And all the gorgeous sights which fairies
do behold.

He would entice that other Man to hear
His music, and to view his imagery: 65
And, sooth, these two were each to the
other dear:

No livelier love in such a place could be:
There did they dwell—from earthly
labour free,

As happy spirits as were ever seen;
If but a bird, to keep them company, 70
Or butterfly sate down, they were, I ween,
As pleased as if the same had been a
Maiden-queen.

VI

LOUISA¹

AFTER ACCOMPANYING HER ON A MOUN-
TAIN EXCURSION

[Composed (probably) 1801.—Published 1807.]

I MET Louisa in the shade,
And, having seen that lovely Maid,

¹ On the question of the identity of *Louisa*, see
Editor's note on *To a Butterfly*, p. 699.—ED.

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

Why should I fear to say
That, nymph-like, she is fleet and strong,
And down the rocks can leap along 5
Like rivulets in May?

[And she hath smiles to earth unknown;
Smiles, that with motion of their own
Do spread, and sink, and rise;
That come and go with endless play,
And ever, as they pass away,
Are hidden in her eyes.¹]

She loves her fire, her cottage-home;
Yet o'er the moorland will she roam
In weather rough and bleak;
And, when against the wind she strains,
Oh! might I kiss the mountain rains
That sparkle on her cheek.

Take all that's mine 'beneath the moon,'
If I with her but half a noon
May sit beneath the walls 15
Of some old cave, or mossy nook,
When up she winds along the brook
To hunt the waterfalls.

VII

[Composed 1799.—Published 1800.]

STRANGE fits of passion have I known:
And I will dare to tell,
But in the Lover's ear alone,
What once to me befell.

When she I loved looked every day 5
Fresh as a rose in June,
I to her cottage bent my way,
Beneath an evening-moon.

Upon the moon I fixed my eye,
All over the wide lea; 10
With quickening pace my horse drew nigh
Those paths so dear to me.

And now we reached the orchard-plot;
And, as we climbed the hill,
The sinking moon to Lucy's cot
Came near, and nearer still. 15

In one of those sweet dreams I slept,
Kind Nature's gentlest boon!
And all the while my eyes I kept
On the descending moon. 20

My horse moved on; hoof after hoof
He raised, and never stopped:
When down behind the cottage roof,
At once, the bright moon dropped.

What fond and wayward thoughts will
slide 25

Into a Lover's head!
'O mercy!' to myself I cried,
'If Lucy should be dead!'

¹ This stanza came second in all edd. from 1807 to 1843. It was most unfortunately omitted—for some reason unknown to us—in edd. 1845 and 1849.—Ed.

VIII

[Composed 1799.—Published 1800.]

SHE dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone 5
Half hidden from the eye!
—Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be; 10
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me!

IX

[Composed 1801.—Published 1807.]

I TRAVELLED among unknown men,
In lands beyond the sea;
Nor, England! did I know till then
What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream! 5
Nor will I quit thy shore
A second time; for still I seem
To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
The joy of my desire; 10
And she I cherished turned her wheel
Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed,
The bowers where Lucy played;
And thine too is the last green field 15
That Lucy's eyes surveyed.

X

[Composed 1826.—Published 1827.]

ERE with cold beads of midnight dew
Had mingled tears of thine,
I grieved, fond Youth! that thou shouldst
sue
To haughty Geraldine.

Immoveable by generous sighs, 5
She glories in a train
Who drag, beneath our native skies,
An Oriental chain.

Pine not like them with arms across,
Forgetting in thy care 10
How the fast-rooted trees can toss
Their branches in mid air.

The humblest rivulet will take
Its own wild liberties;
And every day the imprisoned lake 15
Is flowing in the breeze.

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

Then crouch no more on suppliant
knee,
But scorn with scorn outbrave;
A Briton, even in love, should be
A subject, not a slave!

O weary struggle! silent years
Tell seemingly no doubtful tale;
And yet they leave it short, and fears 10
And hopes are strong and will prevail.
My calmest faith escapes not pain;
And, feeling that the hope is vain,
I think that he will come again.

XI

TO —

[Composed 1824.—Published 1827.]

LOOK at the fate of summer flowers,
Which blow at daybreak, droop ere even-
song;
And, grieved for their brief date, confess
that ours,
Measured by what we are and ought to
be,
Measured by all that, trembling, we fore-
see, 5
Is not so long!

If human Life do pass away,
Perishing yet more swiftly than the flower,
If we are creatures of a *winter's* day;
What space hath Virgin's beauty to dis-
close 10
Her sweets, and triumph o'er the breath-
ing rose?
Not even an hour!

The deepest grove whose foliage hid
The happiest lovers Arcady might boast,
Could not the entrance of this thought
forbid: 15
O be thou wise as they, soul-gifted Maid!
Nor rate too high what must so quickly
fade,
So soon be lost.

Then shall love teach some virtuous
Youth
'To draw, out of the object of his eyes,' 20
The while on thee they gaze in simple
truth,
Hues more exalted, 'a refined Form,'
That dreads not age, nor suffers from the
worm,
And never dies.

XII

THE FORSAKEN

[Dated 1804 (W.).—Probably composed earlier.—
Published 1842.]

THE peace which others seek they find;
The heaviest storms not longest last;
Heaven grants even to the guiltiest mind
An amnesty for what is past;
When will my sentence be reversed? 5
I only pray to know the worst;
And wish, as if my heart would burst.

XIII

[Composed 1800.—Published 1800.]

'Tis said that some have died for love:
And here and there a church-yard grave
is found
In the cold north's unhallowed ground,
Because the wretched man himself had
slain,
His love was such a grievous pain. 5
And there is one whom I five years have
known;
He dwells alone
Upon Helvellyn's side:
He loved—the pretty Barbara died;
And thus he makes his moan: 10
Three years had Barbara in her grave
been laid
When thus his moan he made:

'Oh, move, thou Cottage, from behind
that oak!
Or let the aged tree uprooted lie,
That in some other way yon smoke 15
May mount into the sky!
The clouds pass on; they from the hea-
vens depart:
I look—the sky is empty space;
I know not what I trace;
But when I cease to look, my hand is on
my heart. 20

'O! what a weight is in these shades!
Ye leaves,
That murmur once so dear, when will it
cease?
Your sound my heart of rest bereaves,
It robs my heart of peace.
Thou Thrush, that singest loud—and loud
and free, 25
Into yon row of willows flit,
Upon that alder sit;
Or sing another song, or choose another
tree.

'Roll back, sweet Rill! back to thy
mountain-bounds, 29
And there for ever be thy waters chained!
For thou dost haunt the air with sounds
That cannot be sustained;
If still beneath that pine-tree's ragged
bough
Headlong yon waterfall must come,
Oh let it then be dumb! 35
Be anything, sweet Rill, but that which
thou art now.

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

'Thou Eglantine, so bright with sunny
showers,
Proud as a rainbow spanning half the
vale,
Thou one fair shrub, oh! shed thy flowers,
And stir not in the gale. 40
For thus to see thee nodding in the air,
To see thy arch thus stretch and bend,
Thus rise and thus descend,—
Disturbs me till the sight is more than I
can bear.'

The Man who makes this feverish complaint 45

Is one of giant stature, who could dance
Equipped from head to foot in iron mail.
Ah gentle Love! if ever thought was thine
To store up kindred hours for me, thy
face

Turn from me, gentle Love! nor let me
walk 50

Within the sound of Emma's voice, nor
know

Such happiness as I have known to-day.

XIV

A COMPLAINT

[Composed 1806.—Published 1807.]

THERE is a change—and I am poor;
Your love hath been, nor long ago,
A fountain at my fond heart's door,
Whose only business was to flow;
And flow it did; not taking heed 5
Of its own bounty, or my need.

What happy moments did I count!
Blest was I then all bliss above!
Now, for that consecrated fount
Of murmuring, sparkling, living love, 10
What have I? shall I dare to tell?
A comfortless and hidden well.

A well of love—it may be deep—
I trust it is,—and never dry:
What matter? if the waters sleep 15
In silence and obscurity.
—Such change, and at the very door
Of my fond heart, hath made me poor.

XV

TO —

[Composed 1824.—Published 1827.]

LET other bards of angels sing,
Bright suns without a spot;
But thou art no such perfect thing:
Rejoice that thou art not!

Heed not tho' none should call thee fair;
So, Mary, let it be 6
If nought in loveliness compare
With what thou art to me.

True beauty dwells in deep retreats,
Whose veil is unremoved 10
Till heart with heart in concord beats,
And the lover is beloved.

XVI

[Composed (?).—Published 1845.]

Yes! thou art fair, yet be not moved
To scorn the declaration,
That sometimes I in thee have loved
My fancy's own creation.

Imagination needs must stir; 5
Dear Maid, this truth believe,
Minds that have nothing to confer
Find little to perceive.

Be pleased that nature made thee fit 10
To feed my heart's devotion,
By laws to which all Forms submit
In sky, air, earth, and ocean.

XVII

[Composed 1824.—Published 1827.]

How rich that forehead's calm expanse!
How bright that heaven-directed glance!
—Waft her to glory, winged Powers,
Ere sorrow be renewed,
And intercourse with mortal hours 5
Bring back a humbler mood!
So looked Cecilia when she drew
An Angel from his station;
So looked; not ceasing to pursue
Her tuneful adoration! 10

But hand and voice alike are still;
No sound *here* sweeps away the will
That gave it birth: in service meek
One upright arm sustains the cheek,
And one across the bosom lies— 15
That rose, and now forgets to rise,
Subdued by breathless harmonies
Of meditative feeling;
Mute strains from worlds beyond the
skies,
Through the pure light of female eyes 20
Their sanctity revealing!

XVIII

[Composed (?).—Published 1845.]

WHAT heavenly smiles! O Lady mine,
Through my very heart they shine;
And, if my brow gives back their light,
Do thou look gladly on the sight;
As the clear Moon with modest pride 5
Beholds her own bright beams
Reflected from the mountain's side
And from the headlong streams.

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

XIX

TO —

[Composed 1824.—Published 1827.]

O DEARER far than light and life are dear,
Full oft our human foresight I deplore;
Trembling, through my unworthiness,
with fear
That friends, by death disjoined, may
meet no more!

Misgivings, hard to vanquish or control, 5
Mix with the day, and cross the hour of
rest;
While all the future, for thy purer soul,
With 'sober certainties' of love is blest.

That sigh of thine, not meant for human
ear,
Tells that these words thy humbleness
offend; 10

Yet bear me up—else faltering in the rear
Of a steep march: support me to the end.

Peace settles where the intellect is meek,
And Love is dutiful in thought and deed;
Through Thee communion with that
Love I seek: 15
The faith Heaven strengthens where he
moulds the Creed.

XX

LAMENT OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

ON THE EVE OF A NEW YEAR

[Composed 1817.—Published 1820.]

I

SMILE of the Moon!—for so I name
That silent greeting from above;
A gentle flash of light that came
From her whom drooping captives love;
Or art thou of still higher birth? 5
Thou that didst part the clouds of earth
My torpor to reprove!

II

Bright boon of pitying Heaven!—alas,
I may not trust thy placid cheer!
Pondering that Time to-night will pass 10
The threshold of another year;
For years to me are sad and dull;
My very moments are too full
Of hopelessness and fear.

III

And yet the soul-awakening gleam, 15
That struck perchance the farthest cone
Of Scotland's rocky wilds, did seem
To visit me, and me alone;
Me, unapproached by any friend,
Save those who to my sorrows lend 20
Tears due unto their own.

IV

To-night the church-tower bells will ring
Through these wide realms a festive peal;
To the new year a welcoming;
A tuneful offering for the weal 25
Of happy millions lulled in sleep;
While I am forced to watch and weep,
By wounds that may not heal.

V

Born all too high, by wedlock raised
Still higher—to be cast thus low! 30
Would that mine eyes had never gazed
On aught of more ambitious show
Than the sweet flowerets of the fields!
—It is my royal state that yields
This bitterness of woe. 35

VI

Yet how?—for I, if there be truth
In the world's voice, was passing fair;
And beauty, for confiding youth,
Those shocks of passion can prepare
That kill the bloom before its time; 40
And blanch, without the owner's crime,
The most resplendent hair.

VII

Unblest distinction! showered on me
To bind a lingering life in chains:
All that could quit my grasp, or flee, 45
Is gone;—but not the subtle stains
Fixed in the spirit; for even here
Can I be proud that jealous fear
Of what I was remains.

VIII

A Woman rules my prison's key; 50
A sister Queen, against the bent
Of law and holiest sympathy,
Detains me, doubtful of the event;
Great God, who feel'st for my distress,
My thoughts are all that I possess, 55
O keep them innocent!

IX

Farewell desire of human aid,
Which abject mortals vainly court!
By friends deceived, by foes betrayed,
Of fears the prey, of hopes the sport; 60
Nought but the world-redeeming Cross
Is able to supply my loss,
My burthen to support.

X

Hark! the death-note of the year
Sounded by the castle-clock! 65
From her sunk eyes a stagnant tear
Stole forth, unsettled by the shock;
But oft the woods renewed their green,
Ere the tired head of Scotland's Queen
Reposed upon the block! 70

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

XXI

THE COMPLAINT

OF A FORSAKEN INDIAN WOMAN

[Composed 1798.—Published 1798.]

[When a Northern Indian, from sickness, is unable to continue his journey with his companions, he is left behind, covered over with deer-skins, and is supplied with water, food, and fuel, if the situation of the place will afford it. He is informed of the track which his companions intend to pursue, and if he be unable to follow, or overtake them, he perishes alone in the desert, unless he should have the good fortune to fall in with some other tribes of Indians. The females are equally, or still more, exposed to the same fate. See that very interesting work Hearne's 'Journey from Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean.' In the high northern latitudes, as the same writer informs us, when the northern lights vary their position in the air, they make a rustling and a crackling noise, as alluded to in the following poem.]

I

BEFORE I see another day,
Oh let my body die away!
In sleep I heard the northern gleams;
The stars, they were among my dreams;
In rustling conflict through the skies, 5
I heard, I saw the flashes drive,
And yet they are upon my eyes,
And yet I am alive;
Before I see another day,
Oh let my body die away! 10

II

My fire is dead: it knew no pain;
Yet is it dead, and I remain:
All stiff with ice the ashes lie;
And they are dead, and I will die.
When I was well, I wished to live, 15
For clothes, for warmth, for food, and fire;
But they to me no joy can give,
No pleasure now, and no desire.
Then here contented will I lie!
Alone, I cannot fear to die. 20

III

Alas! ye might have dragged me on
Another day, a single one!
Too soon I yielded to despair;
Why did ye listen to my prayer?
When ye were gone my limbs were 25
stronger;
And oh, how grievously I rue,
That, afterwards, a little longer,
My friends, I did not follow you!
For strong and without pain I lay,
Dear friends, when ye were gone away. 30

IV

My Child! they gave thee to another,
A woman who was not thy mother.

When from my arms my Babe they took,
On me how strangely did he look!
Through his whole body something ran,
A most strange working did I see; 36
—As if he strove to be a man,
That he might pull the sledge for me:
And then he stretched his arms, how wild!

Oh mercy! like a helpless child. 40

V

My little joy! my little pride!
In two days more I must have died.
Then do not weep and grieve for me;
I feel I must have died with thee.
O wind, that o'er my head art flying, 45
The way my friends their course did bend,
I should not feel the pain of dying,
Could I with thee a message send;
Too soon, my friends, ye went away;
For I had many things to say. 50

VI

I'll follow you across the snow;
Ye travel heavily and slow;
In spite of all my weary pain
I'll look upon your tents again.
—My fire is dead, and snowy white 55
The water which beside it stood:
The wolf has come to me to-night,
And he has stolen away my food.
For ever left alone am I;
Then wherefore should I fear to die? 60

VII

Young as I am, my course is run,
I shall not see another sun;
I cannot lift my limbs to know
If they have any life or no.
My poor forsaken Child, if I 65
For once could have thee close to me,
With happy heart I then would die,
And my last thought would happy be;
But thou, dear Babe, art far away,
Nor shall I see another day. 70

XXII

THE LAST OF THE FLOCK

[Composed 1798.—Published 1798.]

I

In distant countries have I been,
And yet I have not often seen
A healthy man, a man full grown,
Weep in the public roads, alone.
But such a one, on English ground,
And in the broad highway, I met;
Along the broad highway he came,
His cheeks with tears were wet;
Sturdy he seemed, though he was sad;
And in his arms a Lamb he had.

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

II

He saw me, and he turned aside,
As if he wished himself to hide;
And with his coat did then essay
To wipe those briny tears away.
I followed him, and said, 'My friend, 15
What ails you? wherefore weep you so?'
—'Shame on me, Sir! this lusty Lamb,
He makes my tears to flow.
To-day I fetched him from the rock;
He is the last of all my flock. 20

III

'When I was young, a single man,
And after youthful follies ran,
Though little given to care and thought,
Yet, so it was, an ewe I bought;
And other sheep from her I raised, 25
As healthy sheep as you might see;
And then I married, and was rich
As I could wish to be;
Of sheep I numbered a full score,
And every year increased my store. 30

IV

'Year after year my stock it grew;
And from this one, this single ewe,
Full fifty comely sheep I raised,
As fine a flock as ever grazed!
Upon the Quantock hills they fed; 35
They thrive, and we at home did thrive:
—This lusty Lamb of all my store
Is all that is alive;
And now I care not if we die,
And perish all of poverty. 40

V

'Six Children, Sir! had I to feed;
Hard labour in a time of need!
My pride was tamed, and in our grief
I of the Parish asked relief.
They said, I was a wealthy man; 45
My sheep upon the uplands fed,
And it was fit that thence I took
Whereof to buy us bread.
"Do this: how can we give to you,"
They cried, "what to the poor is due?" 50

VI

'I sold a sheep, as they had said,
And bought my little children bread,
And they were healthy with their food;
For me—it never did me good.
A woeful time it was for me, 55
To see the end of all my gains,
The pretty flock which I had reared
With all my care and pains,
To see it melt like snow away—
For me it was a woeful day. 60

VII

'Another still! and still another!
A little lamb, and then its mother!

It was a vein that never stopped—
Like blood-drops from my heart they
dropped.
Till thirty were not left alive 65
They dwindled, dwindled, one by one;
And I may say, that many a time
I wished they all were gone—
Reckless of what might come at last
Were but the bitter struggle past. 70

VIII

'To wicked deeds I was inclined,
And wicked fancies crossed my mind;
And every man I chanced to see,
I thought he knew some ill of me: 75
No peace, no comfort could I find,
No ease, within doors or without;
And crazily and wearily
I went my work about;
And off was moved to flee from home,
And hide my head where wild beasts
roam. 80

IX

'Sir! 'twas a precious flock to me,
As dear as my own children be;
For daily with my growing store
I loved my children more and more. 85
Alas! it was an evil time;
God cursed me in my sore distress;
I prayed, yet every day I thought
I loved my children less;
And every week, and every day,
My flock it seemed to melt away. 90

X

'They dwindled, Sir, sad sight to see!
From ten to five, from five to three,
A lamb, a wether, and a ewe;—
And then at last from three to two;
And, of my fifty, yesterday 95
I had but only one:
And here it lies upon my arm,
Alas! and I have none;—
To-day I fetched it from the rock;
It is the last of all my flock.' 100

XXIII

REPENTANCE

A PASTORAL BALLAD

[Composed 1804.—Published 1820.]

THE fields which with covetous spirit we
sold,
Those beautiful fields, the delight of the
day,
Would have brought us more good than a
burthen of gold,
Could we but have been as contented as
they.

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

When the troublesome Tempter beset us,
 said I,
 'Let him come, with his purse proudly
 grasped in his hand;
 But, Allan, be true to me, Allan,—we'll
 die
 Before he shall go with an inch of the
 land!'

There dwelt we, as happy as birds in their
 bowers;
 Unfettered as bees that in gardens abide;
 We could do what we liked with the land,
 it was ours;
 And for us the brook murmured that ran
 by its side.

But now we are strangers, go early or
 late;
 And often, like one overburthened with
 sin,
 With my hand on the latch of the half-
 opened gate,
 I look at the fields, but I cannot go in!

When I walk by the hedge on a bright
 summer's day,
 Or sit in the shade of my grandfather's tree,
 A stern face it puts on, as if ready to say,
 'What ails you, that you must come
 creeping to me!'

With our pastures about us, we could not
 be sad;
 Our comfort was near if we ever were
 crost;
 But the comfort, the blessings, and wealth
 that we had,
 We slighted them all,—and our birth-
 right was lost.

Oh, ill-judging sire of an innocent son
 Who must now be a wanderer! but peace
 to that strain!

Think of evening's repose when our
 labour was done,
 The sabbath's return; and its leisure's
 soft chain!

And in sickness, if night had been sparing
 of sleep,
 How cheerful, at sunrise, the hill where I
 stood,

Looking down on the kine, and our trea-
 sure of sheep
 That besprinkled the field; 'twas like
 youth in my blood!

Now I cleave to the house, and am dull as
 a snail;

And, oftentimes, hear the church-bell
 with a sigh,

That follows the thought—We've no land
 in the vale,

Save six feet of earth where our fore-
 fathers lie!

XXIV

THE

AFFLICTION OF MARGARET —

[Dated 1804 (W.).—Probably composed earlier
 (1801?).—Published 1807.]

I

WHERE art thou, my beloved Son,
 Where art thou, worse to me than dead?
 Oh find me, prosperous or undone!
 Or, if the grave be now thy bed,
 Why am I ignorant of the same
 That I may rest; and neither blame
 Nor sorrow may attend thy name?

II

Seven years, alas! to have received
 No tidings of an only child;
 To have despaired, have hoped, believed,
 And been for evermore beguiled;
 Sometimes with thoughts of very bliss!
 I catch at them, and then I miss;
 Was ever darkness like to this?

III

He was among the prime in worth,
 An object beauteous to behold;
 Well born, well bred; I sent him forth
 Ingenuous, innocent, and bold:
 If things ensued that wanted grace,
 As hath been said, they were not base;
 And never blush was on my face.

IV

Ah! little doth the young-one dream,
 When full of play and childish cares,
 What power is in his wildest scream,
 Heard by his mother unawares!
 He knows it not, he cannot guess:
 Years to a mother bring distress;
 But do not make her love the less.

V

Neglect me! no, I suffered long
 From that ill thought; and, being blind,
 Said, 'Fride shall help me in my wrong:
 Kind mother have I been, as kind
 As ever breathed;' and that is true;
 I've wet my path with tears like dew,
 Weeping for him when no one knew.

VI

My Son, if thou be humbled, poor,
 Hopeless of honour and of gain,
 Oh! do not dread thy mother's door;
 Think not of me with grief and pain:
 I now can see with better eyes;
 And worldly grandeur I despise,
 And fortune with her gifts and lies.

VII

Alas! the fowls of heaven have wings,
 And blasts of heaven will aid their flight;
 They mount—how short a voyage brings
 The wanderers back to their delight!

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

Chains tie us down by land and sea;
And wishes, vain as mine, may be
All that is left to comfort thee.

VIII

Perhaps some dungeon hears thee groan,
Maimed, mangled by inhuman men; 51
Or thou upon a desert thrown
Inheritest the lion's den;
Or hast been summoned to the deep,
Thou, thou and all thy mates, to keep 55
An incommunicable sleep.

IX

I look for ghosts; but none will force
Their way to me: 'tis falsely said
That there was ever intercourse
Between the living and the dead; 60
For, surely, then I should have sight
Of him I wait for day and night,
With love and longings infinite.

X

My apprehensions come in crowds;
I dread the rustling of the grass; 65
The very shadows of the clouds
Have power to shake me as they pass:
I question things and do not find
One that will answer to my mind;
And all the world appears unkind. 70

XI

Beyond participation lie
My troubles, and beyond relief:
If any chance to heave a sigh,
They pity me, and not my grief.
Then come to me, my Son, or send 75
Some tidings that my woes may end;
I have no other earthly friend!

XXV

THE COTTAGER TO HER INFANT

BY MY SISTER

[Composed 1805.—Published 1815.]

THE days are cold, the nights are long,
The north-wind sings a doleful song;
Then hush again upon my breast;
All merry things are now at rest,
Save thee, my pretty Love! 5

The kitten sleeps upon the hearth,
The crickets long have ceased their mirth;
There's nothing stirring in the house
Save one wee, hungry, nibbling mouse,
Then why so busy thou? 10

Nay! start not at that sparkling light;
'Tis but the moon that shines so bright
On the window pane bedropped with
rain:
Then little Darling! sleep again,
And wake when it is day. 15

XXVI

MATERNAL GRIEF

[Composed 1810 (?).—Published 1842.]

DEPARTED Child! I could forget thee once
Though at my bosom nursed; this woeful
gain
Thy dissolution brings, that in my soul
Is present and perpetually abides
A shadow, never, never to be displaced 5
By the returning substance, seen or
touched,
Seen by mine eyes, or clasped in my
embrace,
Absence and death how differ they! and
how
Shall I admit that nothing can restore 9
What one short sigh so easily removed?—
Death, life, and sleep, reality and thought,
Assist me, God, their boundaries to
know,
O teach me calm submission to thy Will!

The Child she mourned had over-
stepped the pale
Of Infancy, but still did breathe the air 15
That sanctifies its confines, and partook
Reflected beams of that celestial light
To all the Little-ones on sinful earth
Not unvouchsafed—a light that warmed
and cheered
Those several qualities of heart and mind
Which, in her own blest nature, rooted
deep, 21
Daily before the Mother's watchful eye,
And not hers only, their peculiar charms
Unfolded,—beauty, for its present self,
And for its promises to future years, 25
With not unfrequent rapture fondly
hailed.

Have you espied upon a dewy lawn
A pair of Leverets each provoking each
To a continuance of their fearless sport,
Two separate Creatures in their several
gifts 30
Abounding, but so fashioned that, in all
That Nature prompts them to display,
their looks,
Their starts of motion and their fits of
rest, 5
An undistinguishable style appears
And character of gladness, as if Spring 35
Lodged in their innocent bosoms, and the
spirit
Of the rejoicing morning were their own?

Such union, in the lovely Girl main-
tained
And her twin Brother, had the parent
seen,
Ere, pouncing like a ravenous bird of
prey, 40
Death in a moment parted them, and left

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

The Mother, in her turns of anguish,
 worse
 Than desolate; for oft-times from the
 sound
 Of the survivor's sweetest voice (dear
 child,
 He knew it not) and from his happiest
 looks, 45
 Did she extract the food of self-reproach,
 As one that lived ungrateful for the stay
 By Heaven afforded to uphold her
 maimed
 And tottering spirit. And full oft the Boy,
 Now first acquainted with distress and
 grief, 50
 Shrunk from his Mother's presence,
 shunned with fear
 Her sad approach, and stole away to find,
 In his known haunts of joy where'er he
 might,
 A more congenial object. But, as time
 Softened her pangs, and reconciled the
 child 55
 To what he saw, he gradually returned,
 Like a scared Bird encouraged to renew
 A broken intercourse; and, while his eyes
 Were yet with pensive fear and gentle awe
 Turned upon her who bore him, she
 would stoop 60
 To imprint a kiss that lacked not power
 to spread
 Faint colour over both their pallid cheeks,
 And stilled his tremulous lip. Thus they
 were calmed
 And cheered; and now together breathe
 fresh air
 In open fields; and when the glare of
 day 65
 Is gone, and twilight to the Mother's wish
 Befriends the observance, readily they join
 In walks whose boundary is the lost One's
 grave,
 Which he with flowers hath planted,
 finding there
 Amusement, where the Mother does not
 miss 70
 Dear consolation, kneeling on the turf
 In prayer, yet blending with that solemn
 rite
 Of pious faith the vanities of grief;
 For such, by pitying Angels and by
 Spirits
 Transferred to regions upon which the
 clouds 75
 Of our weak nature rest not, must be
 deemed
 Those willing tears, and unforbidden
 sighs,
 And all those tokens of a cherished sor-
 row,
 Which, soothed and sweetened by the
 grace of Heaven 79
 As now it is, seems to her own fond heart
 Immortal as the love that gave it being.

XXVII

THE SAILOR'S MOTHER

[Composed March 11, 12, 1802.—Published 1807.]

ONE morning (raw it was and wet—
 A foggy day in winter time)
 A Woman on the road I met,
 Not old, though something past her
 prime:
 Majestic in her person, tall and straight;
 And like a Roman matron's was her mien
 and gait. 6

The ancient spirit is not dead;
 Old times, thought I, are breathing there;
 Proud was I that my country bred
 Such strength, a dignity so fair: 10
 She begged an alms, like one in poor
 estate;

I looked at her again, nor did my pride
 abate.

When from these lofty thoughts I woke,
 'What is it,' said I, 'that you bear,
 Beneath the covert of your Cloak, 15
 Protected from this cold damp air?'
 She answered, soon as she the question
 heard,
 'A simple burthen, Sir, a little Singing-
 bird.'

And, thus continuing, she said,
 'I had a Son, who many a day 20
 Sailed on the seas, but he is dead;
 In Denmark he was cast away:
 And I have travelled weary miles to see
 If aught which he had owned might still
 remain for me.

'The bird and cage they both were his:
 'Twas my Son's bird; and neat and
 trim 26
 He kept it: many voyages
 The singing-bird had gone with him;
 When last he sailed, he left the bird
 behind;

From bodings, as might be, that hung
 upon his mind. 30

'He to a fellow-lodger's care
 Had left it, to be watched and fed,
 And pipe its song in safety;—there
 I found it when my Son was dead;
 And now, God help me for my little
 wit! 35
 I bear it with me, Sir;—he took so much
 delight in it.'

XXVIII

THE CHILDLESS FATHER

[Composed 1800.—Published 1800.]

'UP, Timothy, up with your staff and
 away!
 Not a soul in the village this morning will
 stay;

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

The hare has just started from Hamilton's
grounds,
And Skiddaw is glad with the cry of the
hounds.'

—Of coats and of jackets grey, scarlet,
and green,
On the slopes of the pastures all colours
were seen;
With their comely blue aprons, and caps
white as snow,
The girls on the hills made a holiday
show.

Fresh sprigs of green box-wood, not six
months before,
Filled the funeral basin¹ at Timothy's
door;
A coffin through Timothy's threshold had
past;
One Child did it bear, and that Child
was his last.

Now fast up the dell came the noise and
the fray,
The horse, and the horn, and the hark!
hark away!

Old Timothy took up his staff, and he
shut
With a leisurely motion the door of his
hut.

Perhaps to himself at that moment he
said;
'The key I must take, for my Ellen is
dead.'

But of this in my ears not a word did he
speak;
And he went to the chase with a tear on
his cheek.

XXIX

THE EMIGRANT MOTHER

[Composed March 16, 17, 1802.—Published 1807.]

ONCE in a lonely hamlet I sojourned
In which a Lady driven from France did
dwell;

The big and lesser griefs with which
she mourned
In friendship she to me would often tell.

This Lady, dwelling upon British ground,
Where she was childless, daily would
repair
To a poor neighbouring cottage; as I
found,
For sake of a young Child whose home
was there.

¹ In several parts of the North of England, when a funeral takes place, a basin full of sprigs of box-wood is placed at the door of the house from which the coffin is taken up, and each person who attends the funeral ordinarily takes a sprig of this box-wood, and throws it into the grave of the deceased.

Once having seen her clasp with fond
embrace

This Child, I chanted to myself a lay, 10
Endeavouring, in our English tongue, to
trace

Such things as she unto the Babe might
say:

And thus, from what I heard and knew,
or guessed,
My song the workings of her heart ex-
pressed.

I

'Dear Babe, thou daughter of another, 15
One moment let me be thy mother!
An infant's face and looks are thine
And sure a mother's heart is mine:
Thy own dear mother's far away,
At labour in the harvest field: 20
Thy little sister is at play;—
What warmth, what comfort would it
yield

To my poor heart, if thou wouldst be
One little hour a child to me!

II

'Across the waters I am come, 25
And I have left a babe at home:
A long, long way of land and sea!
Come to me—I'm no enemy:
I am the same who at thy side
Sate yesterday, and made a nest 30
For thee, sweet Baby!—thou hast tried,
Thou know'st the pillow of my breast;
Good, good art thou:—alas! to me
Far more than I can be to thee.

III

'Here, little Darling, dost thou lie; 35
An infant thou, a mother I!
Mine wilt thou be, thou hast no fears;
Mine art thou—spite of these my tears.
Alas! before I left the spot,
My baby and its dwelling-place, 40
The nurse said to me, "Tears should not
Be shed upon an infant's face,
It was unlucky"—no, no, no;
No truth is in them who say so!

IV

'My own dear Little-one will sigh, 45
Sweet Babe! and they will let him die.
"He pines," they'll say, "it is his doom,
And you may see his hour is come."
Oh! had he but thy cheerful smiles,
Limbs stout as thine, and lips as gay, 50
Thy looks, thy cunning, and thy wiles,
And countenance like a summer's day,
They would have hopes of him;—and
then
I should behold his face again!

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

V

'Tis gone—like dreams that we forget;
There was a smile or two—yet—yet 56
I can remember them, I see
The smiles, worth all the world to me.
Dear Baby! I must lay thee down; 59
Thou troublest me with strange alarms;
Smiles hast thou, bright ones of thy own;
I cannot keep thee in my arms;
For they confound me;—where—where is
That last, that sweetest smile of his?

VI

'Oh! how I love thee!—we will stay 65
Together here this one half day.
My sister's child, who bears my name,
From France to sheltering England came;
She with her mother crossed the sea;
The babe and mother near me dwell: 70
Yet does my yearning heart to thee
Turn rather, though I love her well:
Rest, little Stranger, rest thee here!
Never was any child more dear!

VII

'—I cannot help it; ill intent 75
I've none, my pretty Innocent!
I weep—I know they do thee wrong,
These tears—and my poor idle tongue.
Oh, what a kiss was that! my cheek
How cold it is! but thou art good; 80
Thine eyes are on me—they would speak,
I think, to help me if they could.
Blessings upon that soft, warm face,
My heart again is in its place!

VIII

'While thou art mine, my little Love, 85
This cannot be a sorrowful grove;
Contentment, hope, and mother's glee,
I seem to find them all in thee:
Here's grass to play with, here are
flowers;
I'll call thee by my darling's name; 90
Thou hast, I think, a look of ours,
Thy features seem to me the same;
His little sister thou shalt be;
And, when once more my home I see,
I'll tell him many tales of Thee.' 95

XXX

VAUDRACOUR AND JULIA

[Composed probably 1804.—Published 1820.]

The following tale was written as an Episode, in a work from which its length may perhaps exclude it. The facts are true; no invention as to these has been exercised, as none was needed.

O HAPPY time of youthful lovers (thus
My story may begin) O balmy time,
In which a love-knot on a lady's brow
Is fairer than the fairest star in heaven!

To such inheritance of blessed fancy 5
(Fancy that sports more desperately with
minds
Than ever fortune hath been known to
do)
The high-born Vaudracour was brought,
by years
Whose progress had a little overstepped
His stripling prime. A town of small
repute, 10
Among the vine-clad mountains of Au-
vergne,
Was the Youth's birth-place. There he
wooed a Maid
Who heard the heart-felt music of his suit
With answering vows. Plebeian was the
stock,
Plebeian, though ingenuous, the stock, 15
From which her graces and her honours
sprung:
And hence the father of the enamoured
Youth,
With haughty indignation, spurned the
thought
Of such alliance.—From their cradles up,
With but a step between their several
homes, 20
Twins had they been in pleasure; after
strife
And petty quarrels, had grown fond
again;
Each other's advocate, each other's stay;
And, in their happiest moments, not
content,
If more divided than a sportive pair 25
Of sea-fowl, conscious both that they are
hovering
Within the eddy of a common blast,
Or hidden only by the concave depth
Of neighbouring billows from each other's
sight.

Thus, not without concurrence of an
age 30
Unknown to memory, was an earnest
given
By ready nature for a life of love,
For endless constancy, and placid truth;
But whatsoever of such rare treasure lay
Reserved, had fate permitted, for sup-
port 35
Of their maturer years, his present mind
Was under fascination;—he beheld
A vision, and adored the thing he saw.
Arabian fiction never filled the world
With half the wonders that were wrought
for him. 40
Earth breathed in one great presence of
the spring;
Life turned the meanest of her imple-
ments,
Before his eyes, to price above all gold;
The house she dwelt in was a sainted
shrine;

VAUDRACOUR AND JULIA

Her chamber-window did surpass in glory
The portals of the dawn; all Paradise 46
Could, by the simple opening of a door,
Let itself in upon him:—pathways, walks,
Swarmed with enchantment, till his spirit
sank,
Surcharged, within him, overblest to
move 50
Beneath a sun that wakes a weary world
To its dull round of ordinary cares;
A man too happy for mortality!

So passed the time, till, whether through
effect
Of some unguarded moment that dis-
solved 55
Virtuous restraint—ah, speak it, think it,
not!
Deem rather that the fervent Youth, who
saw
So many bars between his present state
And the dear haven where he wished to
be
In honourable wedlock with his Love, 60
Was in his judgment tempted to decline
To perilous weakness, and entrust his
cause
To nature for a happy end of all;
Deem that by such fond hope the Youth
was swayed,
And bear with their transgression, when
I add 65
That Julia, wanting yet the name of wife,
Carried about her for a secret grief
The promise of a mother.

To conceal
The threatened shame, the parents of the
Maid
Found means to hurry her away by night,
And unforewarned, that in some distant
spot 71
She might remain shrouded in privacy,
Until the babe was born. When morning
came,
The Lover, thus bereft, stung with his
loss,
And all uncertain whither he should turn,
Chafed like a wild beast in the toils; but
soon 76
Discovering traces of the fugitives,
Their steps he followed to the Maid's
retreat.
Easily may the sequel be divined—
Walks to and fro—watchings at every
hour; 80
And the fair Captive, who, when'er she
may,
Is busy at her casement as the swallow
Fluttering its pinions, almost within
reach,
About the pendent nest, did thus espy
Her Lover!—thence a stolen interview, 85
Accomplished under friendly shade of
night.

I pass the raptures of the pair;—such
theme
Is, by innumerable poets, touched
In more delightful verse than skill of mine
Could fashion; chiefly by that darling
bard 90
Who told of Juliet and her Romeo,
And of the lark's note heard before its
time,
And of the streaks that laced the severing
clouds
In the unrelenting east.—Through all her
courts
The vacant city slept; the busy winds, 95
That keep no certain intervals of rest,
Moved not; meanwhile the galaxy dis-
played
Her fires, that like mysterious pulses beat
Aloft;—momentous but uneasy bliss!
To their full hearts the universe seemed
hung 100
On that brief meeting's slender filament!

They parted; and the generous Vau-
dracour
Reached speedily the native threshold,
bent
On making (so the Lovers had agreed)
A sacrifice of birthright to attain 105
A final portion from his father's hand;
Which granted, Bride and Bridegroom
then would flee
To some remote and solitary place,
Shady as night, and beautiful as heaven,
Where they may live, with no one to
behold 110
Their happiness, or to disturb their love.
But now of this no whisper; not the less,
If ever an obtrusive word were dropped
Touching the matter of his passion, still,
In his stern father's hearing, Vaudracour
Persisted openly that death alone 116
Should abrogate his human privilege
Divine, of swearing everlasting truth,
Upon the altar, to the Maid he loved.

'You shall be baffled in your mad in-
tent 120
If there be justice in the court of France,'
Muttered the Father.—From these words
the Youth
Conceived a terror; and, by night or day
Stirred nowhere without weapons, that
full soon 124
Found dreadful provocation: for at night,
When to his chamber he retired, attempt
Was made to seize him by three armed
men,
Acting, in furtherance of the Father's will,
Under a private signet of the State.
One the rash Youth's ungovernable hand
Slew, and as quickly to a second gave 131
A perilous wound—he shuddered to be-
hold

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

The breathless corse; then peacefully resigned
His person to the law, was lodged in prison,
And wore the fetters of a criminal. 135

Have you observed a tuft of winged seed
That, from the dandelion's naked stalk,
Mounted aloft, is suffered not to use
Its natural gifts for purposes of rest,
Driven by the autumnal whirlwind to and fro 140

Through the wide element? or have you marked
The heavier substance of a leaf-clad bough,

Within the vortex of a foaming flood,
Tormented? by such aid you may conceive
The perturbation that ensued;—ah, no!

Desperate the Maid—the Youth is stained
With blood; 146

Unmatchable on earth is their disquiet!
Yet as the troubled seed and tortured bough,

Is man, subjected to despotic sway.

For him, by private influence with the Court, 150

Was pardon gained, and liberty procured;
But not without exaction of a pledge,
Which liberty and love dispersed in air.
He flew to her from whom they would divide him—

He clove to her who could not give him peace— 155

Yea, his first world of greeting was,—'All right

Is gone from me; my lately-towering hopes,

To the least fibre of their lowest root,
Are withered; thou no longer canst be mine,

I this—the conscience-stricken must not woo 160

The unruffled Innocent.—I see thy face,
Behold thee, and my misery is complete!'

'One, are we not?' exclaimed the Maiden—'One,

For innocence and youth, for weal and woe?'

Then with the father's name she coupled words 165

Of vehement indignation; but the Youth
Checked her with filial meekness; for no thought

Uncharitable crossed his mind, no sense
Of hasty anger, rising in the eclipse

Of true domestic loyalty, did e'er 170

Find place within his bosom.—Once again
The persevering wedge of tyranny
Achieved their separation: and once more
Were they united,—to be yet again

Disparted, pitiable lot! But here 175
A portion of the tale may well be left
In silence, though my memory could add
Much how the Youth, in scanty space of time,

Was traversed from without; much, too,
Of thoughts

That occupied his days in solitude 180
Under privation and restraint; and what,

Through dark and shapeless fear of things to come,

And what, through strong compunction for the past,

He suffered—breaking down in heart and mind!

Doomed to a third and last captivity,
His freedom he recovered on the eve 186

Of Julia's travail. When the babe was born,

Its presence tempted him to cherish schemes

Of future happiness. 'You shall return, Julia,' said he, 'and to your father's house 190

Go with the child.—You have been wretched; yet

The silver shower, whose reckless burthen weighs

Too heavily upon the lily's head,
Oft leaves a saving moisture at its root.

Malice, beholding you, will melt away. 195
Go!—'tis a town where both of us were

born;

None will reproach you, for our truth is known;

And if, amid those once-bright bowers, our fate

Remain unpitied, pity is not in man.
With ornaments—the prettiest, nature yields 200

Or art can fashion, shall you deck our boy,
And feed his countenance with your own

sweet looks,
Till no one can resist him.—Now, even now,

I see him sporting on the sunny lawn;
My father from the window sees him too; 205

Startled, as if some new-created thing
Enriched the earth, or Faery of the woods

Bounded before him;—but the unweeting Child

Shall by his beauty win his grandsire's heart,

So that it shall be softened, and our loves
End happily, as they began!'

These gleams
Appeared but seldom; oftener was he seen 212

Propping a pale and melancholy face
Upon the Mother's bosom; resting thus

His head upon one breast, while from the other 215

VAUDRACOUR AND JULIA

The Babe was drawing in its quiet food.
—That pillow is no longer to be thine,
Fond Youth! that mournful solace now
must pass

Into the list of things that cannot be!
Unwedded Julia, terror-smitten, hears
The sentence, by her mother's lip pronounced,
That dooms her to a convent.—Who shall
tell,

Who dares report, the tidings to the lord
Of her affections? so they blindly asked
Who knew not to what quiet depths of
weight

Of agony had pressed the Sufferer down:
The word, by others dreaded, he can hear
Composed and silent, without visible sign
Of even the least emotion. Noting this,
When the impatient object of his love
Upbraided him with slackness, he returned

No answer, only took the mother's hand
And kissed it; seemingly devoid of pain,
Or care, that what so tenderly he pressed
Was a dependant on the obdurate heart
Of one who came to disunite their lives
For ever—sad alternative! preferred,
By the unbending Parents of the Maid,
To secret 'spousals meanly disavowed.
—So be it!

In the city he remained
A season after Julia had withdrawn
To those religious walls. He, too, de-
parts—

Who with him?—even the senseless Little-
one.

With that sole charge he passed the city-
gates,
For the last time, attendant by the side
Of a close chair, a litter, or sedan,
In which the Babe was carried. To a hill,
That rose a brief league distant from the
town,

The dwellers in that house where he had
lodged

Accompanied his steps, by anxious love
Impelled;—they parted from him there,
and stood

Watching below till he had disappeared
On the hill top. His eyes he scarcely took,
Throughout that journey, from the vehicle
(Slow-moving ark of all his hopes!) that
veiled

The tender infant: and at every inn,
And under every hospitable tree
At which the bearers halted or reposed,
Laid him with timid care upon his knees,
And looked, as mothers ne'er were known
to look,
Upon the nursing which his arms em-
braced.

This was the manner in which Vau-
dracour

Departed with his infant; and thus
reached

His father's house, where to the innocent
child

Admittance was denied. The young man
spake

No word of indignation or reproof,
But of his father begged, a last request,
That a retreat might be assigned to him,
Where in forgotten quiet he might dwell,
With such allowance as his wants re-
quired;

For wishes he had none. To a lodge that
stood

Deep in a forest, with leave given, at the
age

Of four-and-twenty summers he with-
drew;

And thither took with him his motherless
Babe,

And one domestic for their common
needs,

An aged woman. It consoled him here
To attend upon the orphan, and per-
form

Obsequious service to the precious child,
Which, after a short time, by some mis-
take

Or indiscretion of the Father, died.—
The Tale I follow to its last recess

Of suffering or of peace, I know not
which:

Theirs be the blame who caused the woe,
not mine!

From this time forth he never shared a
smile

With mortal creature. An Inhabitant
Of that same town, in which the pair had
left

So lively a remembrance of their griefs,
By chance of business coming within
reach

Of his retirement, to the forest lodge
Repaired, but only found the matron
there,

Who told him that his pains were thrown
away,

For that her Master never uttered word
To living thing—not even to her.—Be-
hold!

While they were speaking, Vaudracour
approached;

But seeing some one near, as on the latch
Of the garden-gate his hand was laid, he
shrunk—

And, like a shadow, glided out of view.
Shocked at his savage aspect, from the
place

The visitor retired.

Thus lived the Youth
Cut off from all intelligence with man, and
shunning even the light of common
day;

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

Nor could the voice of Freedom, which
through France
Full speedily resounded, public hope,
Or personal memory of his own deep
wrongs,
Rouse him: but in those solitary shades
His days he wasted, an imbecile mind! 306

XXXI

THE IDIOT BOY

[Composed 1798.—Published 1798.]

'Tis eight o'clock,—a clear March night,
The moon is up,—the sky is blue,
The owl, in the moonlight air,
Shouts from nobody knows where;
He lengthens out his lonely shout,
Halloo! halloo! a long halloo!

—Why bustle thus about your door,
What means this bustle, Betty Foy?
Why are you in this mighty fret?
And why on horseback have you set 10
Him whom you love, your Idiot Boy?

Scarcely a soul is out of bed;
Good Betty, put him down again;
His lips with joy they burr at you;
But, Betty! what has he to do 15
With stirrup, saddle, or with rein?

But Betty's bent on her intent;
For her good neighbour Susan Gale,
Old Susan, she who dwells alone,
Is sick, and makes a piteous moan,
As if her very life would fail. 20

There's not a house within a mile,
No hand to help them in distress;
Old Susan lies a-bed in pain,
And sorely puzzled are the twain,
For what she ails they cannot guess. 25

And Betty's husband's at the wood,
Where by the week he doth abide,
A woodman in the distant vale;
There's none to help poor Susan Gale; 30
What must be done? what will betide?

And Betty from the lane has fetched
Her Pony, that is mild and good;
Whether he be in joy or pain,
Feeding at will along the lane, 35
Or bringing fagots from the wood.

And he is all in travelling trim,—
And, by the moonlight, Betty Foy
Has on the well-girt saddle set
(The like was never heard of yet) 40
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy.

And he must post without delay
Across the bridge and through the dale,
And by the church, and o'er the down,
To bring a Doctor from the town, 45
Or she will die, old Susan Gale.

There is no need of boot or spur,
There is no need of whip or wand;
For Johnny has his holly-bough,
And with a *hurly-burly* now 50
He shakes the green bough in his hand.

And Betty o'er and o'er has told
The Boy, who is her best delight,
Both what to follow, what to shun,
What do, and what to leave undone, 55
How turn to left, and how to right.

And Betty's most especial charge,
Was, 'Johnny! Johnny! mind that you
Come home again, nor stop at all,—
Come home again, whate'er befall, 60
My Johnny, do, I pray you, do.'

To this did Johnny answer make,
Both with his head and with his hand,
And proudly shook the bridle too;
And then! his words were not a few, 65
Which Betty well could understand.

And now that Johnny is just going,
Though Betty's in a mighty flurry,
She gently pats the Pony's side,
On which her Idiot Boy must ride, 70
And seems no longer in a hurry.

But when the Pony moved his legs,
Oh! then for the poor Idiot Boy!
For joy he cannot hold the bridle,
For joy his head and heels are idle, 75
He's idle all for very joy.

And, while the Pony moves his legs,
In Johnny's left hand you may see
The green bough motionless and dead:
The Moon that shines above his head 80
Is not more still and mute than he.

His heart it was so full of glee
That, till full fifty yards were gone,
He quite forgot his holly whip,
And all his skill in horsemanship: 85
Oh! happy, happy, happy John.

And while the Mother, at the door,
Stands fixed, her face with joy o'erflows,
Proud of herself, and proud of him,
She sees him in his travelling trim, 90
How quietly her Johnny goes.

The silence of her Idiot Boy,
What hopes it sends to Betty's heart!
He's at the guide-post—he turns right;
She watches till he's out of sight, 95
And Betty will not then depart.

Burr, burr—now Johnny's lips they burr,
As loud as any mill, or near it;
Meek as a lamb the Pony moves,
And Johnny makes the noise he loves, 100
And Betty listens, glad to hear it. 101

THE IDIOT BOY

Away she hies to Susan Gale:
Her Messenger's in merry tune;
The owlets hoot, the owlets curr,
And Johnny's lips they burr, burr, burr,
As on he goes beneath the moon. 106

His steed and he right well agree;
For of this Pony there's a rumour
That, should he lose his eyes and ears,
And should he live a thousand years, 110
He never will be out of humour.

But then he is a horse that thinks!
And, when he thinks, his pace is slack;
Now, though he knows poor Johnny well,
Yet, for his life, he cannot tell 115
What he has got upon his back.

So through the moonlight lanes they go,
And far into the moonlight dale,
And by the church, and o'er the down,
To bring a Doctor from the town, 120
To comfort poor old Susan Gale.

And Betty, now at Susan's side,
Is in the middle of her story,
What speedy help her Boy will bring,
With many a most diverting thing, 125
Of Johnny's wit, and Johnny's glory.

And Betty, still at Susan's side,
By this time is not quite so hurried:
Demure with porringer and plate
She sits, as if in Susan's fate 130
Her life and soul were buried.

But Betty, poor good woman! she,
You plainly in her face may read it,
Could lend out of that moment's store
Five years of happiness or more 135
To any that might need it.

But yet I guess that now and then
With Betty all was not so well;
And to the road she turns her ears,
And thence full many a sound she hears, 141
Which she to Susan will not tell.

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans;
'As sure as there's a moon in heaven,'
Cries Betty, 'he'll be back again;
They'll both be here—'tis almost ten— 145
Both will be here before eleven.'

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans;
The clock gives warning for eleven;
'Tis on the stroke—'He must be near,'
Quoth Betty, 'and will soon be here, 150
As sure as there's a moon in heaven.'

The clock is on the stroke of twelve,
And Johnny is not yet in sight:
—The Moon's in heaven, as Betty sees,
But Betty is not quite at ease; 155
And Susan has a dreadful night.

And Betty, half an hour ago,
On Johnny vile reflections cast:
'A little idle sauntering Thing!'
With other names, an endless string; 160
But now that time is gone and past.

And Betty's drooping at the heart,
That happy time all past and gone,
'How can it be he is so late?
The Doctor, he has made him wait; 165
Susan! they'll both be here anon.'

And Susan's growing worse and worse,
And Betty's in a sad *quandary*;
And then there's nobody to say
If she must go, or she must stay! 170
—She's in a sad *quandary*.

The clock is on the stroke of one;
But neither Doctor nor his Guide
Appears along the moonlight road;
There's neither horse nor man abroad, 175
And Betty's still at Susan's side

And Susan now begins to fear
Of sad mischances not a few,
That Johnny may perhaps be drowned;
Or lost, perhaps, and never found; 180
Which they must both for ever rue.

She prefaced half a hint of this
With, 'God forbid it should be true!'
At the first word that Susan said
Cried Betty, rising from the bed, 185
'Susan, I'd gladly stay with you.'

'I must be gone, I must away:
Consider, Johnny's but half-wise;
Susan, we must take care of him,
If he is hurt in life or limb'— 190
'Oh God forbid!' poor Susan cries.

'What can I do?' says Betty, going,
'What can I do to ease your pain?
Good Susan tell me, and I'll stay;
I fear you're in a dreadful way, 195
But I shall soon be back again.'

'Nay, Betty, go! good Betty, go!
There's nothing that can ease my pain.'
Then off she hies; but with a prayer,
That God poor Susan's life would spare, 201
Till she comes back again.

So, through the moonlight lane she goes,
And far into the moonlight dale;
And how she ran, and how she walked,
And all that to herself she talked, 205
Would surely be a tedious tale.

In high and low, above, below,
In great and small, in round and square,
In tree and tower was Johnny seen,
In bush and brake, in black and green; 211
'Twas Johnny, Johnny, everywhere.

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

And while she crossed the bridge, there
came

A thought with which her heart is sore—
Johnny perhaps his horse forsook,
To hunt the moon within the brook, 215
And never will be heard of more.

Now is she high upon the down,
Alone amid a prospect wide;
There's neither Johnny nor his Horse
Among the fern or in the gorse; 220
There's neither Doctor nor his Guide.

'Oh saints! what is become of him?
Perhaps he's climbed into an oak,
Where he will stay till he is dead;
Or sadly he has been misled, 225
And joined the wandering gipsy-folk.

'Or him that wicked Pony's carried
To the dark cave, the goblin's hall;
Or in the castle he's pursuing
Among the ghosts his own undoing; 230
Or playing with the waterfall.'

At poor old Susan then she railed,
While to the town she posts away;
'If Susan had not been so ill,
Alas! I should have had him still, 235
My Johnny, till my dying day.'

Poor Betty, in this sad distemper,
The Doctor's self could hardly spare:
Unworthy things she talked, and wild;
Even he, of cattle the most mild, 240
The Pony had his share.

But now she's fairly in the town,
And to the Doctor's door she hies;
'Tis silence all on every side;
The town so long, the town so wide, 245
Is silent as the skies.

And now she's at the Doctor's door,
She lifts the knocker, rap, rap, rap;
The Doctor at the casement shows
His glimmering eyes that peep and doze!
And one hand rubs his old night-cap. 251

'Oh Doctor! Doctor! where's my Johnny?'
'I'm here, what is't you want with me?'

He's not so wise as some folks be:
'The devil take his wisdom!' said
The Doctor, looking somewhat grim,
'What, Woman! should I know of him?'
And, grumbling, he went back to bed! 261

'O woe is me! O woe is me!
Here will I die; here will I die;
I thought to find my lost one here,
But he is neither far nor near, 265
Oh! what a wretched Mother I!'

She stops, she stands, she looks about;
Which way to turn she cannot tell.
Poor Betty! it would ease her pain
If she had heart to knock again; 270
—The clock strikes three—a dismal knell!

Then up along the town she hies,
No wonder if her senses fail;
This piteous news so much it shocked her,
She quite forgot to send the Doctor, 275
To comfort poor old Susan Gale.

And now she's high upon the down,
And she can see a mile of road:
'O cruel! I'm almost threescore;
Such night as this was ne'er before, 280
There's not a single soul abroad.'

She listens, but she cannot hear
The foot of horse, the voice of man;
The streams with softest sound are flow-
ing,
The grass you almost hear it growing,
You hear it now, if e'er you can. 286

The owlets through the long blue night
Are shouting to each other still:
Fond lovers! yet not quite hob nob,
They lengthen out the tremulous sob, 290
That echoes far from hill to hill.

Poor Betty now has lost all hope,
Her thoughts are bent on deadly sin,
A green-grown pond she just has past,
And from the brink she hurries fast, 295
Lest she should drown herself therein.

And now she sits her down and weeps;
Such tears she never shed before;
'Oh dear, dear Pony! my sweet joy!
Oh carry back my Idiot Boy! 300
And we will ne'er o'erload thee more.'

A thought is come into her head:
The Pony he is mild and good,
And we have always used him well;
Perhaps he's gone along the dell, 305
And carried Johnny to the wood.

Then up she springs as if on wings;
She thinks no more of deadly sin;

310

Oh Reader! now that I might tell
What Johnny and his Horse are doing!
What they've been doing all this time,
Oh could I put it into rhyme, 315
A most delightful tale pursuing!

Perhaps, and no unlikely thought!
He with his Pony now doth roam
The cliffs and peaks so high that are,
To lay his hands upon a star, 320
And in his pocket bring it home.

THE IDIOT BOY

Perhaps he's turned himself about,
His face unto his horse's tail,
And, still and mute, in wonder lost,
All silent as a horseman-ghost,
He travels slowly down the vale.

325

And now, perhaps, is hunting sheep,
A fierce and dreadful hunter he;
Yon valley, now so trim and green,
In five months' time, should he be seen,
A desert wilderness will be!

331

Perhaps, with head and heels on fire,
And like the very soul of evil,
He's galloping away, away,
And so will gallop on for aye,
The bane of all that dread the devil!

335

I to the Muses have been bound
These fourteen years, by strong inden-
tures:

O gentle Muses! let me tell
But half of what to him befell;
He surely met with strange adventures.

340

O gentle Muses! is this kind?
Why will ye thus my suit repel?
Why of your further aid bereave me?
And can ye thus unfriended leave me?
Ye Muses! whom I love so well?

345

Who's yon, that, near the waterfall,
Which thunders down with headlong force,
Beneath the moon, yet shining fair,
As careless as if nothing were,
Sits upright on a feeding horse?

350

Unto his horse—there feeding free,
He seems, I think, the rein to give;
Of moon or stars he takes no heed;
Of such we in romances read:
—'Tis Johnny! Johnny! as I live.

355

And that's the very Pony, too!
Where is she, where is Betty Foy?
She hardly can sustain her fears;
The roaring waterfall she hears,
And cannot find her Idiot Boy.

360

Your Pony's worth his weight in gold:
Then calm your terrors, Betty Foy!
She's coming from among the trees,
And now all full in view she sees
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy.

365

And Betty sees the Pony too:
Why stand you thus, good Betty Foy?
It is no goblin, 'tis no ghost,
'Tis he whom you so long have lost,
He whom you love, your Idiot Boy.

370

She looks again—her arms are up—
She screams—she cannot move for joy;
She darts, as with a torrent's force,
She almost has o'erturned the Horse,
And fast she holds her Idiot Boy.

375

And Johnny burra, and laughs aloud;
Whether in cunning or in joy
I cannot tell; but, while he laughs,
Betty a drunken pleasure quaffs
To hear again her Idiot Boy.

380

And now she's at the Pony's tail,
And now is at the Pony's head,—
On that side now, and now on this;
And, almost stifled with her bliss,
A few sad tears does Betty shed.

385

She kisses o'er and o'er again
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy;
She's happy here, is happy there,
She is uneasy everywhere;
Her limbs are all alive with joy.

390

She pats the Pony, where or when
She knows not, happy Betty Foy!
The little Pony glad may be,
But he is milder far than she,
You hardly can perceive his joy.

395

'Oh! Johnny, never mind the Doctor;
You've done your best, and that is all.'
She took the reins, when this was said,
And gently turned the Pony's head
From the loud waterfall.

400

By this the stars were almost gone,
The moon was setting on the hill,
So pale you scarcely looked at her:
The little birds began to stir,
Though yet their tongues were still.

405

The Pony, Betty, and her Boy,
Wind slowly through the woody dale;
And who is she, betimes abroad,
That hobbles up the steep rough road?
Who is it, but old Susan Gale?

411

Long time lay Susan lost in thought;
And many dreadful fears beset her,
Both for her Messenger and Nurse;
And, as her mind grew worse and worse,
Her body—it grew better.

416

She turned, she tossed herself in bed,
On all sides doubts and terrors met her;
Point after point did she discuss;
And, while her mind was fighting thus,
Her body still grew better.

421

'Alas! what is become of them?
These fears can never be endured;
I'll to the wood.'—The word scarce said,
Did Susan rise up from her bed,
As if by magic cured.

425

Away she goes up hill and down,
And to the wood at length is come;
She spies her Friends, she shouts a greet-
ing;
Oh me! it is a merry meeting
As ever was in Christendom.

430

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

The owls have hardly sung their last,
While our four travellers homeward
wend;

The owls have hooted all night long,
And with the owls began my song, 435
And with the owls must end.

For, while they all were travelling home,
Cried Betty, 'Tell us, Johnny, do,
Where all this long night you have been,
What you have heard, what you have
seen: 440

And, Johnny, mind you tell us true.'

Now Johnny all night long had heard
The owls in tuneful concert strive;
No doubt too he the moon had seen;
For in the moonlight he had been 445
From eight o'clock till five.

And thus, to Betty's question, he
Made answer, like a traveller bold,
(His very words I give to you,)
'The cocks did crow to-whoop, to-whoop,
And the sun did shine so cold!' 451
—Thus answered Johnny in his glory,
And that was all his travel's story.

XXXII

MICHAEL

A PASTORAL POEM

[Composed October 11—December 9, 1800.—
Published 1800.]

If from the public way you turn your
steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Green-head
Ghyll,
You will suppose that with an upright
path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold
ascent
The pastoral mountains front you, face
to face. 5
But, courage! for around that boisterous
brook
The mountains have all opened out them-
selves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen; but they
Who journey thither find themselves
alone 10
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones,
and kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude;
Nor should I have made mention of this
Dell
But for one object which you might pass
by, 15
Might see and notice not. Beside the
brook

Appears a straggling heap of unhewn
stones!

And to that simple object appertains
A story—unriched with strange events,
Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside, 20
Or for the summer shade. It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spake to me
Of Shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
Whom I already loved;—not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and
hills 25

Where was their occupation and abode.
And hence this Tale, while I was yet a
Boy

Careless of books, yet having felt the
power

Of Nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects, led me on to feel 30
For passions that were not my own, and
think

(At random and imperfectly indeed)
On man, the heart of man, and human
life.

Therefore, although it be a history
Homely and rude, I will relate the same 35
For the delight of a few natural hearts;
And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful Poets, who among these hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.

UPON the forest-side in Grasmere Vale
There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his
name; 41

An old man, stout of heart, and strong of
limb.

His bodily frame had been from youth to
age

Of an unusual strength: his mind was
keen,

Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs, 45
And in his shepherd's calling he was
prompt

And watchful more than ordinary men.
Hence had he learned the meaning of all

winds,

Of blasts of every tone; and oftentimes,
When others heeded not, He heard the
South 50

Make subterraneous music, like the noise
Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.

The Shepherd, at such warning, of his
flock

Bethought him, and he to himself would
say,

'The winds are now devising work for
me!' 55

And, truly, at all times, the storm, that
drives

The traveller to a shelter, summoned him
Up to the mountains: he had been alone

Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
That came to him, and left him, on the
heights. 60

So lived he till his eightieth year was past.

And grossly that man errs, who should
 suppose
 That the green valleys, and the streams
 and rocks,
 Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's
 thoughts.
 Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had
 breathed 65
 The common air; hills, which with vigorous
 step
 He had so often climbed; which had
 impressed
 So many incidents upon his mind
 Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;
 Which, like a book, preserved the
 memory 70
 Of the dumb animals, whom he had
 saved,
 Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts
 The certainty of honourable gain;
 Those fields, those hills—what could they
 less? had laid
 Strong hold on his affections, were to
 him 75
 A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
 The pleasure which there is in life itself.

His days had not been passed in single-
 ness.
 His Helpmate was a comely matron,
 old—
 Though younger than himself full twenty
 years. 80
 She was a woman of a stirring life,
 Whose heart was in her house: two
 wheels she had
 Of antique form; this large, for spinning
 wool;
 That small, for flax; and, if one wheel had
 rest,
 It was because the other was at work. 85
 The Pair had but one inmate in their
 house,
 An only Child, who had been born to
 them
 When Michael, telling o'er his years,
 began
 To deem that he was old,—in shepherd's
 phrase,
 With one foot in the grave. This only
 Son, 90
 With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many
 a storm,
 The one of an inestimable worth,
 Made all their household. I may truly
 say,
 That they were as a proverb in the vale
 For endless industry. When day was
 gone, 95
 And from their occupations out of doors
 The Son and Father were come home,
 even then,
 Their labour did not cease; unless when
 all

Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and
 there,
 Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed
 milk, 100
 Sat round the basket piled with oaten
 cakes,
 And their plain home-made cheese. Yet
 when the meal
 Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was
 named)
 And his old Father both betook them-
 selves
 To such convenient work as might employ
 Their hands by the fire-side; perhaps to
 card 106
 Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or
 repair
 Some injury done to sickle, flail, or
 scythe,
 Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the ceiling, by the chim-
 ney's edge, 110
 That in our ancient uncouth country
 style
 With huge and black projection over-
 browed
 Large space beneath, as duly as the light
 Of day grew dim the Housewife hung a
 lamp;
 An aged utensil, which had performed 115
 Service beyond all others of its kind.
 Early at evening did it burn—and late,
 Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
 Which, going by from year to year, had
 found,
 And left, the couple neither gay perhaps
 Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with
 hopes, 121
 Living a life of eager industry.
 And now, when Luke had reached his
 eighteenth year,
 There by the light of this old lamp they
 sate,
 Father and Son, while far into the night
 The Housewife plied her own peculiar
 work, 126
 Making the cottage through the silent
 hours
 Murmur as with the sound of summer
 flies.
 This light was famous in its neighbour-
 hood,
 And was a public symbol of the life 130
 That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it
 chanced,
 Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
 Stood single, with large prospect, north
 and south,
 High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,
 And westward to the village near the
 lake; 135
 And from this constant light, so regular,
 And so far seen, the House itself, by all

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
Both old and young, was named THE
EVENING STAR.

Thus living on through such a length of
years, 140
The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must
needs
Have loved his Helpmate; but to Mi-
chael's heart
This son of his old age was yet more
dear—
Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
Fond spirit that blindly works in the
blood of all— 145
Than that a child, more than all other
gifts
That earth can offer to declining man,
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking
thoughts,
And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail. 150
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
His heart and his heart's joy! For often-
times
Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
Had done him female service, not alone
For pastime and delight, as is the use 155
Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
His cradle, as with a woman's gentle
hand.

And in a later time, ere yet the Boy
Had put on boy's attire, did Michael
love, 160
Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
To have the Young-one in his sight,
when he
Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's
stool
Sate with a fettered sheep before him
stretched
Under the large old oak, that near his
door 165
Stood single, and, from matchless depth
of shade,
Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the
sun,
Thence in our rustic dialect was called
The CLIPPING TREE,¹ a name which yet it
bears,
There, while they two were sitting in the
shade. 170
With others round them, earnest all and
blithe,
Would Michael exercise his heart with
looks
Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
Upon the Child, if he disturbed the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his
shouts 175
¹ Clipping is the word used in the North of Eng-
land for shearing.

Scared them, while they lay still beneath
the shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the
boy grew up
A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old;
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
With his own hand a sapling, which he
hooped 181
With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,
And gave it to the Boy; wherewith equipt
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock;
And, to his office prematurely called, 187
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hindrance and a
help;
And for this cause not always, I believe,
Receiving from his Father hire of praise;
Though nought was left undone which
staff, or voice,
Or looks, or threatening gestures, could
perform.

But soon as Luke, full ten years old,
could stand
Against the mountain blasts; and to the
heights, 195
Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
He with his Father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the Shepherd loved
before
Were dearer now? that from the Boy
there came 200
Feelings and emanations—things which
were
Light to the sun and music to the wind;
And that the old Man's heart seemed
born again?

Thus in his Father's sight the Boy grew
up:
And now, when he had reached his
eighteenth year, 205
He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household
lived
From day to day, to Michael's ear there
came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been
bound 210
In surety for his brother's son, a man
Of an industrious life, and ample means;
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had prest upon him; and old Michael
now
Was summoned to discharge the for-
feiture, 215
A grievous penalty, but little less

Than half his substance. This unlooked-
for claim,

At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he sup-
posed

That any old man ever could have
lost.

As soon as he had armed himself with
strength

To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at
once

A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve; he thought

again,
And his heart failed him. 'Isabel,' said
he,

Two evenings after he had heard the
news,

'I have been toiling more than seventy
years,

And in the open sunshine of God's love
Have we all lived; yet, if these fields of
ours

Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.

Our lot is a hard lot; the sun himself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I;

And I have lived to be a fool at last

To my own family. An evil man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he

Were false to us; and, if he were not false,
There are ten thousand to whom loss

like this
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him;—

but

'Twere better to be dumb than to talk
thus.

When I began, my purpose was to
speak

Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land

Shall not go from us, and it shall be
free;

He shall possess it, free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou

know'st,
Another kinsman—he will be our friend

In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade—and Luke to him shall

go,

And with his kinsman's help and his own
thrift

He quickly will repair this loss, and then
He may return to us. If here he stay,

What can be done? Where every one is
poor,

What can be gained?

At this the old Man paused,

And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
Was busy, looking back into past times.
There's Richard Bateman, thought she to
herself,

He was a parish-boy—at the church-door
They made a gathering for him, shillings,

pence,

And halfpennies, wherewith the neigh-
bours bought

A basket, which they filled with pedlar's
wares;

And, with this basket on his arm, the lad
Went up to London, found a master

there,
Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy
To go and overlook his merchandise

Beyond the seas; where he grew wondrous
rich,

And left estates and monies to the poor,
And, at his birth-place, built a chapel

floored
With marble, which he sent from foreign
lands,

These thoughts, and many others of like
sort,

Passed quickly through the mind of
Isabel,

And her face brightened. The old Man
was glad,

And thus resumed:—'Well, Isabel! this
scheme

These two days has been meat and drink
to me.

Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
—We have enough—I wish indeed that I

Were younger;—but this hope is a good
hope.

Make ready Luke's best garments, of the
best

Buy for him more, and let us send him
forth

To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
If he *could* go, the Boy should go to-
night.'

Here Michael ceased, and to the fields
went forth

With a light heart. The Housewife for
five days

Was restless morn and night, and all day
long

Wrought on with her best fingers to
prepare

Things needful for the journey of her son.
But Isabel was glad when Sunday came

To stop her in her work: for, when she lay
By Michael's side, she through the last

two nights
Heard him, how he was troubled in his
sleep:

And when they rose at morning she could
see

That all his hopes were gone. That day
at noon

She said to Luke, while they two by
themselves

Were sitting at the door, 'Thou must
not go;

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

We have no other Child but thee to lose,
None to remember—do not go away,
For if thou leave thy Father he will die.
The Youth made answer with a jocund
voice;
And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
Recovered heart. That evening her best
fare 301
Did she bring forth, and all together sat
Like happy people round a Christmas
fire.

With daylight Isabel resumed her work;
And all the ensuing week the house
appeared 305
As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length
The expected letter from their kinsman
came,
With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the Boy;
To which, requests were added, that
forthwith 310
He might be sent to him. Ten times or
more
The letter was read over; Isabel
Went forth to show it to the neighbours
round;
Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When
Isabel 315
Had to her house returned, the old Man
said,
'He shall depart to-morrow.' To this
word
The Housewife answered, talking much
of things
Which, if at such short notice he should
go,
Would surely be forgotten. But at length
She gave consent, and Michael was at
ease. 321

Near the tumultuous brook of Green-
head Ghyll,
In that deep valley, Michael had designed
To build a Sheep-fold; and, before he
heard
The tidings of his melancholy loss, 325
For this same purpose he had gathered up
A heap of stones, which by the stream-
let's edge
Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
With Luke that evening thitherward he
walked:
And soon as they had reached the place
he stopped, 330
And thus the old Man spake to him:—
'My son,
To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with full
heart
I look upon thee, for thou art the same
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
I will relate to thee some little part 336

Of our two histories; 'twill do thee good
When thou art from me, even if I should
touch
On things thou canst not know of.—
After thou
First cam'st into the world—as oft befalls
To new-born infants—thou didst sleep
away 341
Two days, and blessings from thy Father's
tongue
Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed
on,
And still I loved thee with increasing
love.
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
Than when I heard thee by our own fire-
side 346
First uttering, without words, a natural
tune;
While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy
joy
Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month
followed month,
And in the open fields my life was passed
And on the mountains; else I think that
thou 351
Hast been brought up upon thy Father's
knees.
But we were playmates, Luke: among
these hills,
As well thou knowest, in us the old and
young
Have played together, nor with me didst
thou 355
Lack any pleasure which a boy can know.'
Luke had a manly heart; but at these
words
He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped
his hand,
And said, 'Nay, do not take it so—I see
That these are things of which I need not
speak. 360
—Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good Father: and herein
I but repay a gift which I myself
Received at others' hands; for, though
now old
Beyond the common life of man, I still 365
Remember them who loved me in my
youth.
Both of them sleep together: here they
lived,
As all their Forefathers had done; and,
when
At length their time was come, they were
not loth
To give their bodies to the family mould.
I wished that thou shouldst live the life
they lived, 371
But 'tis a long time to look back, my Son,
And see so little gain from threescore
years.
These fields were burthened when they
came to me;

Till I was forty years of age, not more 375
 Than half of my inheritance was mine.
 I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in
 my work,

And till these three weeks past the land
 was free.

—It looks as if it never could endure
 Another Master. Heaven forgive me,
 Luke, 380
 If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
 That thou shouldst go.'

At this the old Man paused;
 Then, pointing to the stones near which
 they stood,

Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:
 'This was a work for us; and now, my
 Son, 385

It is a work for me. But, lay one stone—
 Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own
 hands.

Nay, Boy, be of good hope;—we both
 may live

To see a better day. At eighty-four
 I still am strong and hale;—do thou thy
 part; 390

I will do mine.—I will begin again
 With many tasks that were resigned to
 thee:

Up to the heights, and in among the
 storms,

Will I without thee go again, and do 394
 All works which I was wont to do alone,
 Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless
 thee, Boy!

Thy heart these two weeks has been beat-
 ing fast

With many hopes; it should be so—yes—
 yes—

I knew that thou couldst never have a
 wish

To leave me, Luke: thou hast been bound
 to me 400

Only by links of love: when thou art
 gone,

What will be left to us!—But I forget
 My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,
 As I requested; and hereafter, Luke,
 When thou art gone away, should evil
 men 405

Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,
 And of this moment; hither turn thy
 thoughts,

And God will strengthen thee: amid all
 fear

And all temptation, Luke, I pray that
 thou

May'st bear in mind the life thy Fathers
 lived, 410

Who, being innocent, did for that cause
 Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare
 thee well—

When thou return'st, thou in this place
 wilt see

A work which is not here: a covenant 414

'Twill be between us; but, whatever fate
 Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
 And bear thy memory with me to the
 grave.'

The Shepherd ended here; and Luke
 stooped down,

And, as his Father had requested, laid
 The first stone of the Sheep-fold. At the
 sight 420

The old Man's grief broke from him; to
 his heart

He pressed his Son, he kissed him and
 wept;

And to the house together they returned.
 —Hushed was that House in peace, or
 seeming peace,

Ere the night fell:—with morrow's dawn
 the Boy 425

Began his journey, and, when he had
 reached

The public way, he put on a bold face;
 And all the neighbours, as he passed their
 doors,

Came forth with wishes and with farewell
 prayers, 429

That followed him till he was out of sight.

A good report did from their Kinsman
 come,

Of Luke and his well-doing; and the Boy
 Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous
 news,

Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were
 throughout 434

'The prettiest letters that were ever seen.'
 Both parents read them with rejoicing
 hearts.

So, many months passed on: and once
 again

The Shepherd went about his daily work
 With confident and cheerful thoughts;
 and now

Sometimes when he could find a leisure
 hour 440

He to that valley took his way, and there
 Wrought at the Sheep-fold. Meantime
 Luke began

To slacken in his duty; and, at length,
 He in the dissolute city gave himself

To evil courses: ignominy and shame 445

Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
 To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of
 love;

'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
 Would overset the brain, or break the
 heart: 450

I have conversed with more than one who
 well

Remember the old Man, and what he was
 Years after he had heard this heavy news.

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

His bodily frame had been from youth to
age

Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
He went, and still looked up to sun and
cloud,
And listened to the wind; and, as before,
Performed all kinds of labour for his
sheep,
And for the land, his small inheritance.
And to that hollow dell from time to
time
Did he repair, to build the Fold of which
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart
For the old Man—and 'tis believed by all
That many and many a day he thither
went,
And never lifted up a single stone.

There, by the Sheep-fold, sometimes
was he seen
Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog,
Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
The length of full seven years, from time
to time,
He at the building of this Sheep-fold
wrought,
And left the work unfinished when he
died.
Three years, or little more, did Isabel
Survive her Husband: at her death the
estate
Was sold, and went into a stranger's
hand.
The Cottage which was named THE EVEN-
ING STAR
Is gone—the ploughshare has been
through the ground
On which it stood; great changes have
been wrought
In all the neighbourhood:—yet the oak
is left
That grew beside their door; and the
remains
Of the unfinished Sheep-fold may be seen
Beside the boisterous brook of Greenhead
Ghyll.

XXXIII

THE WIDOW ON WINDERMERE SIDE

[Composed 1837 (?).—Published 1842.]

I

How beautiful when up a lofty height
Honour ascends among the humblest
poor,
And feeling sinks as deep! See there the
door
Of One, a Widow, left beneath a weight
Of blameless debt. On evil Fortune's
spite

She wasted no complaint, but strove to
make
A just repayment, both for conscience-
sake
And that herself and hers should stand
upright
In the world's eye. Her work when day-
light failed
Paused not, and through the depth of
night she kept
Such earnest vigils, that belief prevailed
With some, the noble Creature never
slept;
But, one by one, the hand of death as-
sailed
Her children from her inmost heart be-
wept.

II

The Mother mourned, nor ceased her
tears to flow,
Till a winter's noon-day placed her buried
Son
Before her eyes, last child of many gone—
His raiment of angelic white, and lo!
His very feet bright as the dazzling snow
Which they are touching; yea far brighter,
even
As that which comes, or seems to come,
from heaven,
Surpasses aught these elements can show.
Much she rejoiced, trusting that from
that hour
What'er befell she could not grieve or
pine;
But the Transfigured, in and out of
season,
Appeared, and spiritual presence gained
a power
Over material forms that mastered reason.
Oh, gracious Heaven, in pity make her
thine!

III

But why that prayer? as if to her could
come
No good but by the way that leads to
bliss
Through Death,—so judging we should
judge amiss.
Since reason failed want is her threatened
doom,
Yet frequent transports mitigate the
gloom:
Nor of those maniacs is she one that kiss
The air or laugh upon a precipice;
No, passing through strange sufferings
toward the tomb,
She smiles as if a martyr's crown were
won:
Oft, when light breaks through clouds or
waving trees,
With outspread arms and fallen upon her
knees

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

The Mother hails in her descending Son
An Angel, and in earthly ecstasies 41
Her own angelic glory seems begun.

Sad deliverance would it be, and yoked
with shame,
Should troubles overflow on her from
whom it came.' 30

XXXIV

THE ARMENIAN LADY'S LOVE

[Composed 1830.—Published 1835.]

[The subject of the following poem is from the Orlandus of the author's friend, Kenelm Henry Digby: and the liberty is taken of inscribing it to him as an acknowledgment, however unworthy, of pleasure and instruction derived from his numerous and valuable writings, illustrative of the piety and chivalry of the olden time.]

I

You have heard 'a Spanish Lady
How she wooed an English man;'¹
Hear now of a fair Armenian,
Daughter of the proud Soldan;
How she loved a Christian Slave, and told
her pain 5
By word, look, deed, with hope that he
might love again.

II

'Pluck that rose, it moves my liking,'
Said she, lifting up her veil;
'Pluck it for me, gentle gardener,
Ere it wither and grow pale.' 10
'Princess fair, I till the ground, but may
not take
From twig or bed an humbler flower,
even for your sake!'

III

'Grieved am I, submissive Christian!
To behold thy captive state;
Women, in your land, may pity 15
(May they not?) the unfortunate.'
'Yes, kind Lady! otherwise man could
not bear
Life, which to every one that breathes is
full of care.'

IV

'Worse than idle is compassion
If it end in tears and sighs; 20
Thee from bondage would I rescue
And from vile indignities;
Nurtured, as thy mien bespeaks, in high
degree,
Look up—and help a hand that longs to
set thee free.'

V

'Lady! dread the wish, nor venture 25
In such peril to engage;
Think how it would stir against you
Your most loving father's rage:

¹ See in Percy's Reliques that fine old ballad, 'The Spanish Lady's Love,' from which Poem the form of stanza, as suitable to dialogue, is adopted.

VI

'Generous Frank! the just in effort
Are of inward peace secure:
Hardships for the brave encountered
Even the feeblest may endure:
If almighty grace through me thy chains
unbind, 35
My father for slave's work may seek a
slave in mind.'

VII

'Princess, at this burst of goodness,
My long-frozen heart grows warm!'
'Yet you make all courage fruitless,
Me to save from chance of harm: 40
Leading such companion I that gilded
dome,
Yon minarets, would gladly leave for his
worst home.'

VIII

'Feeling tunes your voice, fair Princess!
And your brow is free from scorn,
Else these words would come like
mockery, 45
Sharper than the pointed thorn.'
'Whence the undeserved mistrust? Too
wide apart
Our faith hath been,—O would that eyes
could see the heart!'

IX

'Tempt me not, I pray; my doom is
These base implements to wield; 50
Rusty lance, I ne'er shall grasp thee,
Ne'er assail my cobwebbed shield!
Never see my native land, nor castle
towers,
Nor Her who thinking of me there counts
widowed hours.'

X

'Prisoner! pardon youthful fancies, 55
Wedded? If you can, say no!
Blessed is and be your consort;
Hopes I cherished—let them go!
Handmaid's privilege would leave my
purpose free,
Without another link to my felicity.' 60

XI

'Wedded love with loyal Christians,
Lady, is a mystery rare;
Body, heart, and soul in union,
Make one being of a pair.'
'Humble love in me would look for no
return, 65
Soft as a guiding star that cheers, but
cannot burn.'

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

XII

'Gracious Allah! by such title
Do I dare to thank the God,
Him who thus exalts thy spirit,
Flower of an unchristian sod! 70
Or hast thou put off wings which thou in
heaven dost wear?
What have I seen, and heard, or dreamt?
where am I? where?'

XIII

Here broke off the dangerous converse:
Less impassioned words might tell
How the pair escaped together, 75
Tears not wanting, nor a knell
Of sorrow in her heart while through her
father's door,
And from her narrow world, she passed
for evermore.

XIV

But affections higher, holier,
Urged her steps; she shrunk from
trust 80
In a sensual creed that trampled
Woman's birthright into dust.
Little be the wonder then, the blame be
none,
If she, a timid Maid, hath put such bold-
ness on.

XV

Judge both Fugitives with knowledge:
In those old romantic days 86
Mighty were the soul's commandments
To support, restrain, or raise.
Foes might hang upon their path, snakes
rustle near,
But nothing from their inward selves had
they to fear. 90

XVI

Thought infirm ne'er came between
them,
Whether printing desert sands
With accordant steps, or gathering
Forest-fruit with social hands;
Or whispering like two reeds that in the
cold moonbeam 95
Bend with the breeze their heads, beside
a crystal stream.

XVII

On a friendly deck reposing
They at length for Venice steer;
There, when they had closed their
voyage,
One, who daily on the pier 100
Watched for tidings from the East, beheld
his Lord,
Fell down and clasped his knees for joy,
not uttering word.

XVIII

Mutual was the sudden transport;
Breathless questions followed fast,
Years contracting to a moment, 105
Each word greedier than the last;
'Hie thee to the Countess, friend! return
with speed,
And of this Stranger speak by whom her
lord was freed.

XIX

'Say that I, who might have languished,
Drooped and pined till life was spent,
Now before the gates of Stolberg 111
My Deliverer would present
For a crowning recompense, the precious
grace
Of her who in my heart still holds her
ancient place.

XX

'Make it known that my Companion
Is of royal eastern blood, 116
Thirsting after all perfection,
Innocent, and meek, and good,
Though with misbelievers bred; but that
dark night
Will holy Church disperse by beams of
gospel-light.' 120

XXI

Swiftly went that grey-haired Servant,
Soon returned a trusty Page
Charged with greetings, benedictions,
Thanks and praises, each a gage
For a sunny thought to cheer the Stran-
ger's way, 125
Her virtuous scruples to remove, her fears
allay.

XXII

And how blest the Reunited,
While beneath their castle-walls
Runs a deafening noise of welcome!—
Blest, though every tear that falls 130
Doth in its silence of past sorrow tell,
And makes a meeting seem most like a
dear farewell.

XXIII

Through a haze of human nature,
Glorified by heavenly light,
Looked the beautiful Deliverer 135
On that overpowering sight,
While across her virgin cheek pure blushes
strayed,
For every tender sacrifice her heart had
made.

XXIV

On the ground the weeping Countess
Kneelt and kissed the Stranger's hand;
Act of soul-devoted homage, 141
Pledge of an eternal band:

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

Nor did aught of future days that kiss
belie,
Which, with a generous shout, the crowd
did ratify.

XXV

Constant to the fair Armenian, 145
Gentle pleasures round her moved,
Like a tutelary spirit
Reverenced, like a sister loved.
Christian meekness smoothed for all the
path of life,
Who, loving most, should wiseliest love, 150
their only strife.

XXVI

Mute memento of that union
In a Saxon church survives,
Where a cross-legged Knight lies sculptured
As between two wedded Wives—
Figures with armorial signs of race and 155
birth,
And the vain rank the pilgrims bore
while yet on earth.

XXXV

LOVING AND LIKING

IRREGULAR VERSES

ADDRESSED TO A CHILD

(BY MY SISTER)

[Composed 1832.—Published 1835.]

There's more in words than I can teach:
Yet listen, Child!—I would not preach;
But only give some plain directions
To guide your speech and your affections.
Say not you *love* a roasted fowl 5
But you may love a screaming owl,
And, if you can, the unwieldy toad
That crawls from his secure abode
Within the mossy garden wall
When evening dew begins to fall. 10
Oh! mark the beauty of his eye:
What wonders in that circle lie!
So clear, so bright, our fathers said
He wears a jewel in his head!
And when, upon some showery day, 15
Into a path or public way
A frog leaps out from bordering grass,
Startling the timid as they pass,
Do you observe him, and endeavour
To take the intruder into favour; 20
Learning from him to find a reason
For a light heart in a dull season.
And you may love him in the pool,
That is for him a happy school,
In which he swims as taught by nature, 25
Fit pattern for a human creature,
Glancing amid the water bright,
And sending upward sparkling light.

Nor blush if o'er your heart be stealing
A love for things that have no feeling: 30
The spring's first rose by you espied,
May fill your breast with joyful pride;
And you may love the strawberry-flower,
And love the strawberry in its bower;
But when the fruit, so often praised 35
For beauty, to your lip is raised,
Say not you *love* the delicate treat,
But *like* it, enjoy it, and thankfully eat.

Long may you love your pensioner
mouse,
Though one of a tribe that torment the 40
house:
Nor dislike for her cruel sport the cat
Deadly foe both of mouse and rat;
Remember she follows the law of her
kind,
And instinct is neither wayward nor blind.
Then think of her beautiful gliding form,
Her tread that would scarcely crush a 46
worm,
And her soothing song by the winter fire,
Soft as the dying throb of the lyre.

I would not circumscribe your love:
It may soar with the eagle and brood 50
with the dove,
May pierce the earth with the patient mole,
Or track the hedgehog to his hole.
Loving and liking are the solace of life,
Rock the cradle of joy, smooth the death-
bed of strife.
You love your father and your mother, 55
Your grown-up and your baby brother;
You love your sister and your friends,
And countless blessings which God sends:
And while these right affections play,
You *live* each moment of your day; 60
They lead you on to full content,
And likings fresh and innocent,
That store the mind, the memory feed,
And prompt to many a gentle deed:
But *likings* come, and pass away; 65
'Tis *love* that remains till our latest day:
Our heavenward guide is holy love,
And will be our bliss with saints above.

XXXVI

FAREWELL LINES

[Composed 1828 (?).—Published 1842.]

'HIGH bliss is only for a higher state,'
But, surely, if severe afflictions borne
With patience merit the reward of peace,
Peace ye deserve; and may the solid good, 5
Sought by a wise though late exchange,
and here
With bounteous hand beneath a cottage-
roof
To you accorded, never be withdrawn,
Nor for the world's best promises re-
nounced.

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

Most soothing was it for a welcome
Friend,

Fresh from the crowded city, to behold
That lonely union, privacy so deep,
Such calm employments, such entire
content.

So when the rain is over, the storm laid,
A pair of herons oft-times have I seen,
Upon a rocky islet, side by side,
Drying their feathers in the sun, at ease;
And so, when night with grateful gloom
had fallen,

Two glow-worms in such nearness that
they shared,
As seemed, their soft self-satisfying light,
Each with the other, on the dewy ground,
Where He that made them blesses their
repose.—

When wandering among lakes and hills
I note,

Once more, those creatures thus by nature
paired,

And guarded in their tranquil state of life,
Even, as your happy presence to my mind
Their union brought, will they repay the
debt,

And send a thankful spirit back to you,
With hope that we, dear Friends! shall
meet again.

XXXVII

THE REDBREAST

(SUGGESTED IN A WESTMORELAND
COTTAGE)

[Composed 1834.—Published 1835.]

DRIVEN in by Autumn's sharpening air
From half-stripped woods and pastures
bare,

Brisk Robin seeks a kindlier home:
Not like a beggar is he come,
But enters as a looked-for guest,
Confiding in his ruddy breast,
As if it were a natural shield
Charged with a blazon on the field,
Due to that good and pious deed
Of which we in the Ballad read.
But pensive fancies putting by,
And wild-wood sorrows, speedily
He plays the expert ventriloquist;
And, caught by glimpses now—now missed,
Puzzles the listener with a doubt
If the soft voice he throws about
Comes from within doors or without!
Was ever such a sweet confusion,
Sustained by delicate illusion?

He's at your elbow—to your feeling
The notes are from the floor or ceiling;
And there's a riddle to be guessed,
Till you have marked his heaving chest,
And busy throat whose sink and swell
Betray the Elf that loves to dwell
In Robin's bosom, as a chosen cell.

Heart-pleased we smile upon the Bird

If seen, and with like pleasure stirred
Commend him, when he's only heard.

But small and fugitive our gain
Compared with *hers* who long hath lain,
With languid limbs and patient head

Reposing on a lone sick-bed;
Where now she daily hears a strain

That cheats her of too busy cares,
Eases her pain, and helps her prayers.

And who but this dear Bird beguiled
The fever of that pale-faced Child;

Now cooling, with his passing wing,
Her forehead, like a breeze of Spring;

Recalling now, with descendant soft
Shed round her pillow from aloft,

Sweet thoughts of angels hovering nigh,
And the invisible sympathy

Of 'Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and
John,

Blessing the bed she lies upon?"
And sometimes, just as listening ends

In slumber, with the cadence blends
A dream of that low-warbled hymn

Which old folk, fondly pleased to trim
Lamps of faith, now burning dim,

Say that the Cherubs carved in stone,
When clouds gave way at dead of night

And the ancient church was filled with
light,

Used to sing in heavenly tone,
Above and round the sacred places

They guard, with winged baby-faces.

Thrice happy Creature! in all lands
Nurtured by hospitable hands:

Free entrance to this cot has he,
Entrance and exit both *yet* free;

And when the keen unruffled weather,
That thus brings man and bird together,

Shall with its pleasantness be past,
And casement closed and door made fast,

To keep at bay the howling blast,
He needs not fear the season's rage,

For the whole house is Robin's cage.
Whether the bird flit here or there,

O'er table *lilt*, or perch on chair,
Though some may frown and make a

stir,
To scare him as a trespasser,

And he belike will flinch or start,
Good friends he has to take his part;

One chiefly, who with voice and look
Pleads for him from the chimney-nook,

Where sits the Dame, and wears away
Her long and vacant holiday;

With images about her heart,
Reflected from the years gone by,

On human nature's second infancy.

¹ The words—

'Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and John.

Bless the bed that I lie on,'
are part of a child's prayer, still in general use
through the northern counties.

POEMS FOUNDED ON THE AFFECTIONS

XXXVIII

HER EYES ARE WILD

[Composed 1798.—Published 1798.]

I

HER eyes are wild, her head is bare,
The sun has burnt her coal-black hair;
Her eyebrows have a rusty stain,
And she came far from over the main.
She has a baby on her arm,
Or else she were alone:
And underneath the hay-stack warm,
And on the greenwood stone,
She talked and sung the woods among,
And it was in the English tongue.

II

'Sweet babe! they say that I am mad,
But nay, my heart is far too glad,
And I am happy when I sing
Full many a sad and doleful thing:
Then, lovely baby, do not fear!
I pray thee have no fear of me;
But safe as in a cradle, here
My lovely baby! thou shalt be:
To thee I know too much I owe;
I cannot work thee any woe.

III

'A fire was once within my brain;
And in my head a dull, dull pain;
And fiendish faces, one, two, three,
Hung at my breast, and pulled at me;
But then there came a sight of joy;
It came at once to do me good;
I waked, and saw my little boy,
My little boy of flesh and blood;
Oh joy for me that sight to see!
For he was here, and only he.

IV

'Suck, little babe, oh suck again!
It cools my blood; it cools my brain;
Thy lips I feel them, baby! they
Draw from my heart the pain away.
Oh! press me with thy little hand;
It loosens something at my chest;
About that tight and deadly band
I feel thy little fingers prest.
The breeze I see is in the tree:
It comes to cool my babe and me.

V

'Oh! love me, love me, little boy!
Thou art thy mother's only joy;
And do not dread the waves below,
When o'er the sea-rock's edge we go;
The high crag cannot work me harm,
Nor leaping torrents when they howl;
The babe I carry on my arm,
He saves for me my precious soul;

Then happy lie; for blest am I;
Without me my sweet babe would die. 50

VI

'Then do not fear, my boy! for thee
Bold as a lion will I be;
And I will always be thy guide,
Through hollow snows and rivers wide.
I'll build an Indian bower; I know 55
The leaves that make the softest bed:
And if from me thou wilt not go,
But still be true till I am dead,
My pretty thing! then thou shalt sing
As merry as the birds in spring. 60

VII

'Thy father cares not for my breast,
'Tis thine, sweet baby, there to rest;
'Tis all thine own!—and if its hue
Be changed, that was so fair to view,
'Tis fair enough for thee, my dove! 65
My beauty, little child, is flown,
But thou wilt live with me in love;
And what if my poor cheek be brown?
'Tis well for me thou canst not see 70
How pale and wan it else would be.

VIII

'Dread not their taunts, my little Life;
I am thy father's wedded wife;
And underneath the spreading tree
We two will live in honesty.
If his sweet boy he could forsake, 75
With me he never would have stayed:
From him no harm my babe can take;
But he, poor man! is wretched made;
And every day we two will pray 80
For him that's gone and far away.

IX

'I'll teach my boy the sweetest things:
I'll teach him how the owl sings.
My little babe! thy lips are still,
And thou hast almost sucked thy fill.
—Where art thou gone, my own dear 85
child?
What wicked looks are those I see?
Alas! Alas! that look so wild,
It never, never came from me: 90
If thou art mad, my pretty lad,
Then I must be for ever sad.

X

'Oh! smile on me, my little lamb!
For I thy own dear mother am:
My love for thee has well been tried;
I've sought thy father far and wide.
I know the poisons of the shade; 95
I know the earth-nuts fit for food:
Then, pretty dear, be not afraid:
We'll find thy father in the wood.
Now laugh and be gay, to the woods 45
away!
And there, my babe, we'll live for
aye.' 100

POEMS ON THE NAMING OF PLACES

ADVERTISEMENT

By persons resident in the country, and attached to rural objects, many places will be found unnamed or of unknown names, where little Incidents must have occurred, or feelings been experienced, which will have given to such places a private and peculiar interest. From a wish to give some sort of record to such Incidents, and renew the gratification of such feelings, Names have been given to Places by the Author and some of his Friends, and the following Poems written in consequence.

I

[Composed 1800.—Published 1800.]

It was an April morning: fresh and clear
The Rivulet, delighting in its strength,
Ran with a young man's speed; and yet
the voice

Of waters which the winter had supplied
Was softened down into a vernal tone. 5
The spirit of enjoyment and desire,
And hopes and wishes, from all living
things

Went circling, like a multitude of sounds.
The budding groves seemed eager to urge
on

The steps of June; as if their various hues
Were only hindrances that stood between
Them and their object: but, meanwhile,
prevailed 12

Such an entire contentment in the air
That every naked ash, and tardy tree
Yet leafless, showed as if the countenance
With which it looked on this delightful
day 16

Were native to the summer.—Up the
brook

I roamed in the confusion of my heart,
Alive to all things and forgetting all.
At length I to a sudden turning came 20
In this continuous glen, where down a
rock

The Stream, so ardent in its course before,
Sent forth such sallies of glad sound, that
all

Which I till then had heard appeared the
voice

Of common pleasure: beast and bird, the
lamb, 25

The shepherd's dog, the linnet and the
thrush,

Vied with this waterfall, and made a song
Which, while I listened, seemed like the
wild growth

Or like some natural produce of the air,
That could not cease to be. Green leaves
were here; 30

But 'twas the foliage of the rocks—the
birch,

The yew, the holly, and the bright green
thorn,

With hanging islands of resplendent
furse:

And on a summit, distant a short space,
By any who should look beyond the dell 35

A single mountain-cottage might be seen,
I gazed and gazed, and to myself I said,
'Our thoughts at least are ours; and this
wild nook,

My EMMA,¹ I will dedicate to thee.'
—Soon did the spot become my other
home, 40

My dwelling, and my out-of-doors abode.
And of the Shepherds who have seen me
there,

To whom I sometimes in our idle talk
Have told this fancy, two or three, per-
haps,

Years after we are gone and in our graves,
When they have cause to speak of this
wild place, 46

May call it by the name of EMMA'S DELL.

II

TO JOANNA

[Composed August, 1800.—Published 1800.]

AMID the smoke of cities did you pass
The time of early youth; and there you
learned,

From years of quiet industry, to love
The living Beings by your own fire-side,
With such a strong devotion, that your
heart 5

Is slow to meet the sympathies of them
Who look upon the hills with tenderness,
And make dear friendships with the
streams and groves.

Yet we, who are transgressors in this kind,
Dwelling retired in our simplicity 10

Among the woods and fields, we love you
well,

Joanna! and I guess, since you have been
So distant from us now for two long years,
That you will gladly listen to discourse
However trivial, if you thence be taught
That they, with whom you once were
happy, talk 16

Familiarly of you and of old times.

While I was seated, now some ten days
past,

Beneath those lofty firs, that overtop
Their ancient neighbour, the old steeple-
tower, 20

¹ Emma: the poet's sister Dorothy; Emmeline is elsewhere used as a pseudonym for her. See editor's note on *To a Butterfly*, p. 699.—Ed.

POEMS ON THE NAMING OF PLACES

The Vicar from his gloomy house hard by
Came forth to greet me; and, when he
had asked,
'How fares Joanna, that wild-hearted
Maid!

And when will she return to us?' he
paused;

And, after short exchange of village news,
He with grave looks demanded for what
cause, 26

Reviving obsolete idolatry,
I, like a Runic Priest, in characters
Of formidable size had chiselled out

Some uncouth name upon the native rock,
Above the Rotha, by the forest-side. 31

—Now, by those dear immunities of
heart

Engendered between malice and true
love,

I was not loth to be so catechised,
And this was my reply:—'As it befell,
One summer morning we had walked
abroad 36

At break of day, Joanna and myself.
—'Twas that delightful season when the
broom,

Full-flowered, and visible on every steep,
Along the copses runs in veins of gold. 40
Our pathway led us on to Rotha's banks;
And, when we came in front of that tall
rock

That eastward looks, I there stopped
short—and stood

Tracing the lofty barrier with my eye
From base to summit; such delight I
found 45

To note in shrub and tree, in stone and
flower,

That intermixture of delicious hues,
Along so vast a surface, all at once,
In one impression, by connecting force
Of their own beauty, imaged in the heart.
—When I had gazed perhaps two minutes'
space, 51

Joanna, looking in my eyes, beheld
That ravishment of mine, and laughed
aloud.

The Rock, like something starting from a
sleep,

Took up the Lady's voice, and laughed
again; 55

That ancient Woman seated on Helm-
crag

Was ready with her cavern; Hammar-
scar,

And the tall Steep of Silver-how, sent
forth

A noise of laughter; southern Loughrigg
heard,

And Fairfield answered with a mountain
tone; 60

Helvellyn far into the clear blue sky
Carried the Lady's voice,—old Skiddaw
blew

His speaking-trumpet;—back out of the
clouds

Of Glaramara southward came the voice;
And Kirkstone tossed it from his misty
head. 65

—Now whether (said I to our cordial
Friend,

Who in the hey-day of astonishment
Smiled in my face) this were in simple
truth

A work accomplished by the brotherhood
Of ancient mountains, or my ear was
touched 70

With dreams and visionary impulses
To me alone imparted, sure I am

That there was a loud uproar in the hills.
And, while we both were listening, to my
side

The fair Joanna drew, as if she wished 75
To shelter from some object of her fear.

—And hence, long afterwards, when
eighteen moons

Were wasted, as I chanced to walk alone
Beneath this rock, at sunrise, on a calm
And silent morning, I sat down, and there,
In memory of affections old and true, 81
I chiselled out in those rude characters
Joanna's name deep in the living stone:—
And I, and all who dwell by my fireside,
Have called the lovely rock, JOANNA'S
Rock.' 85

NOTE.—In Cumberland and Westmoreland are several Inscriptions, upon the native rock, which, from the wasting of time, and the rudeness of the workmanship, have been mistaken for Runic. They are, without doubt, Roman.

The Rotha, mentioned in this poem, is the River which, flowing through the lakes of Grasmere and Rydal, falls into Winandermere. On Helm-crag, that impressive single mountain at the head of the Vale of Grasmere, is a rock which from most points of view bears a striking resemblance to an old Woman cowering. Close by this rock is one of those fissures or caverns, which in the language of the country are called dungeons. Most of the mountains here mentioned immediately surround the Vale of Grasmere; of the others, some are at a considerable distance, but they belong to the same cluster.

III

[Composed 1800.—Published 1800.]

THERE is an Eminence,—of these our hills
The last that parleys with the setting sun;
We can behold it from our orchard seat;
And, when at evening we pursue our walk
Along the public way, this Peak, so high
Above us, and so distant in its height, 6
Is visible; and often seems to send
Its own deep quiet to restore our hearts.
The meteors make of it a favourite haunt:
The star of Jove, so beautiful and large
In the mid heavens, is never half so fair
As when he shines above it. 'Tis in truth
The loneliest place we have among the
clouds.

POEMS ON THE NAMING OF PLACES

And She who dwells with me, whom I
have loved
With such communion that no place on
earth
Can ever be a solitude to me,
Hath to this lonely Summit given my
Name.

IV

[Composed October 10, 1800.—Published 1800.]

A NARROW girdle of rough stones and
crag,
A rude and natural causeway, interposed
Between the water and a winding slope
Of copse and thicket, leaves the eastern
shore
Of Grasmere safe in its own privacy: 5
And there myself and two beloved
Friends,
One calm September morning, ere the mist
Had altogether yielded to the sun,
Sauntered on this retired and difficult
way.
—Ill suits the road with one in haste;
but we 10
Played with our time; and, as we strolled
along,
It was our occupation to observe
Such objects as the waves had tossed
ashore—
Feather, or leaf, or weed, or withered
bough,
Each on the other heaped, along the line
Of the dry wreck. And, in our vacant
mood, 16
Not seldom did we stop to watch some
tuft
Of dandelion seed or thistle's beard,
That skimmed the surface of the dead
calm lake,
Suddenly halting now—a lifeless stand!
And starting off again with freak as
sudden; 21
In all its sportive wanderings, all the while,
Making report of an invisible breeze
That was its wings, its chariot, and its
horse,
Its playmate, rather say, its moving soul.
—And often, trifling with a privilege 26
Alike indulged to all, we paused, one now,
And now the other, to point out, per-
chance
To pluck, some flower or water-weed, too
fair
Either to be divided from the place 30
On which it grew, or to be left alone
To its own beauty. Many such there are,
Fair ferns and flowers, and chiefly that
tall fern,
So stately, of the Queen Osmunda named;
Plant lovelier, in its own retired abode 35
On Grasmere's beach, than Naiad by the
side

Of Grecian brook, or Lady of the Mere,
Sole-sitting by the shores of old romance.
—So fared we that bright morning: from
the fields,
Meanwhile, a noise was heard, the busy
mirth 40
Of reapers, men and women, boys and
girls.
Delighted much to listen to those sounds,
And feeding thus our fancies, we ad-
vanced
Along the indented shore; when suddenly,
Through a thin veil of glittering haze was
seen 45
Before us, on a point of jutting land,
The tall and upright figure of a Man
Attired in peasant's garb, who stood
alone,
Angling beside the margin of the lake.
'Improvident and reckless,' we exclaimed,
'The Man must be, who thus can lose a
day 51
Of the mid harvest, when the labourer's
hire
Is ample, and some little might be stored
Wherewith to cheer him in the winter
time.'
Thus talking of that Peasant, we ap-
proached 55
Close to the spot where with his rod and
line
He stood alone; whereat he turned his
head
To greet us—and we saw a Man worn
down
By sickness, gaunt and lean, with sunken
cheeks
And wasted limbs, his legs so long and
lean 60
That for my single self I looked at them,
Forgetful of the body they sustained.—
Too weak to labour in the harvest field,
The Man was using his best skill to gain
A pittance from the dead unfeeling lake
That knew not of his wants. I will not say
What thoughts immediately were ours,
nor how 67
The happy idleness of that sweet morn,
With all its lovely images, was changed
To serious musing and to self-reproach. 70
Nor did we fail to see within ourselves
What need there is to be reserved in
speech,
And temper all our thoughts with charity.
—Therefore, unwilling to forget that day,
My Friend, Myself, and She who then
received 75
The same admonishment, have called the
place
By a memorial name, uncouth indeed
As e'er by mariner was given to bay
Or foreland, on a new-discovered coast;
And POINT RASH-JUDGMENT is the Name
it bears. 80

POEMS ON THE NAMING OF PLACES

V

TO M. H.

[Composed after December 21, and before
December 28, 1799.—Published 1800.]

OUR walk was far among the ancient
trees:

There was no road, nor any woodman's
path;

But a thick umbrage—checking the wild
growth

Of weed and sapling, along soft green turf
Beneath the branches—of itself had made

A track, that brought us to a slip of lawn,
And a small bed of water in the woods. 7

All round this pool both flocks and herds
might drink

On its firm margin, even as from a well,
Or some stone-basin which the herds-

man's hand 10
Had shaped for their refreshment; nor
did sun,

Or wind from any quarter, ever come,
But as a blessing to this calm recess,

This glade of water and this one green
field.

The spot was made by Nature for herself;
The travellers know it not, and 'twill

remain 16
Unknown to them; but it is beautiful;
And if a man should plant his cottage

near,
Should sleep beneath the shelter of its

trees,
And blend its waters with his daily meal,

He would so love it, that in his death-hour
Its image would survive among his

thoughts: 22
And therefore, my sweet MARY, this still

Nook,
With all its beeches, we have named from

You!

VI

[Begun August 29, 30, 1800.—Finished 1802.—
Published 1815.]

WHEN, to the attractions of the busy
world

Preferring studious leisure, I had chosen
A habitation in this peaceful Vale,

Sharp season followed of continual storm
In deepest winter; and, from week to

week, 5
Pathway, and lane, and public road, were
clogged

With frequent showers of snow. Upon a
hill,

At a short distance from my cottage,
stands

A stately Fir-grove, whither I was wont
To hasten, for I found, beneath the roof 10

Of that perennial shade, a cloistral place
Of refuge, with an unincumbered floor.

Here, in safe covert, on the shallow snow,
And sometimes on a speck of visible

earth,
The redbreast near me hopped; nor was

I loth 15
To sympathize with vulgar coppice birds
That, for protection from the nipping

blast,
Hither repaired.—A single beech-tree

grew
Within this grove of firs! and, on the fork

Of that one beech, appeared a thrush's
nest; 20

A last year's nest, conspicuously built
At such small elevation from the ground

As gave sure sign that they, who in that
house

Of nature and of love had made their
home

Amid the fir-trees, all the summer long 25
Dwelt in a tranquil spot. And oftentimes

A few sheep, stragglers from some moun-
tain-flock,

Would watch my motions with suspicious
stare,

From the remotest outskirts of the
grove,—

Some nook where they had made their
final stand, 30

Huddling together from two fears—the
fear

Of me and of the storm. Full many an
hour

Here did I lose. But in this grove the trees
Had been so thickly planted and had

thriven
In such perplexed and intricate array, 35

That vainly did I seek beneath their stems
A length of open space, where to and fro

My feet might move without concern or
care;

And, baffled thus, though earth from day
to day

Was fettered, and the air by storm dis-
turbed, 40

I ceased the shelter to frequent,—and
prized,

Less than I wished to prize, that calm
recess.

The snows dissolved, and genial Spring
returned

To clothe the fields with verdure. Other
haunts

Meanwhile were mine; till one bright
April day, 45

By chance retiring from the glare of noon,
To this forsaken covert, there I found

A hoary pathway traced between the
trees,

And winding on with such an easy line
Along a natural opening, that I stood 50

Much wondering how I could have sought
in vain

POEMS ON THE NAMING OF PLACES

For what was now so obvious. To abide,
 For an allotted interval of ease,
 Under my cottage-roof, had gladly come
 From the wild sea a cherished Visitant;
 And with the sight of this same path—
 begun, 56
 Begun and ended, in the shady grove,
 Pleasant conviction flashed upon my
 mind
 That, to this opportune recess allured,
 He had surveyed it with a finer eye, 60
 A heart more wakeful; and had worn the
 track
 By pacing here, unwearied and alone,
 In that habitual restlessness of foot
 That haunts the Sailor, measuring o'er
 and o'er
 His short domain upon the vessel's
 deck, 65
 While she pursues her course through the
 dreary sea.

When thou hadst quitted Esthwaite's
 pleasant shore,
 And taken thy first leave of those green
 hills
 And rocks that were the play-ground of
 thy youth,
 Year followed year, my Brother! and we
 two, 70
 Conversing not, knew little in what mould
 Each other's mind was fashioned; and at
 length,
 When once again we met in Grasmere
 Vale,
 Between us there was little other bond
 Than common feelings of fraternal love.
 But thou, a School-boy, to the sea hadst
 carried 76
 Undying recollections; Nature there
 Was with thee; she, who loved us both,
 she still
 Was with thee; and even so didst thou
 become

A silent Poet; from the solitude 80
 Of the vast sea didst bring a watchful
 heart
 Still couchant, an inevitable ear,
 And an eye practised like a blind man's
 touch.¹
 —Back to the joyless Ocean thou art
 gone;
 Nor from this vestige of thy musing hours
 Could I withhold thy honoured name,—
 and now 86
 I love the fir-grove with a perfect love.
 Thither do I withdraw when cloudless
 suns

¹ Lines 1-83 were probably written on August 29, 30, 1800; the remainder in 1802, while John W. was absent on the voyage to China from which he returned in September of that year. Can this be the *Silver How Poem* to which (Dorothy W. tells us) William wrote a conclusion on March 26, 1802? See Knight's 'Life of W. W.,' vol. I. pp. 302-3.—Ed.

Shine hot, or wind blows troublesome
 and strong;
 And there I sit at evening, when the steep
 Of Silver-how, and Grasmere's peaceful
 lake 91
 And one green island, gleam between the
 stems
 Of the dark firs, a visionary scene!
 And while I gaze upon the spectacle
 Of clouded splendour, on this dream-like
 sight 95
 Of solemn loveliness, I think on thee,
 My Brother, and on all which thou hast
 lost.
 Nor seldom, if I rightly guess, while Thou,
 Muttering the verses which I muttered
 first
 Among the mountains, through the mid-
 night watch 100
 Art pacing thoughtfully the vessel's deck
 In some far region, here, while o'er my
 head,
 At every impulse of the moving breeze,
 The fir-grove murmurs with a sea-like
 sound,
 Alone I tread this path;—for aught I
 know, 105
 Timing my steps to thine; and, with a
 store
 Of undistinguishable sympathies,
 Mingling most earnest wishes for the day
 When we, and others whom we love, shall
 meet 109
 A second time, in Grasmere's happy Vale.

NOTE.—This wish was not granted; the lamented Person not long after perished by shipwreck, in discharge of his duty as Commander of the Honourable East India Company's Vessel, the Earl of Abergavenny.

VII

[Composed 1845.—Published 1845.]

FORTH from a jutting ridge, around whose
 base
 Winds our deep Vale, two heath-clad
 Rocks ascend
 In fellowship, the loftiest of the pair
 Rising to no ambitious height; yet both,
 O'er lake and stream, mountain and
 flowery mead, 5
 Unfolding prospects fair as human eyes
 Ever beheld. Up-led with mutual help,
 To one or other brow of those twin Peaks
 Were two adventurous Sisters wont to
 climb,
 And took no note of the hour while
 thence they gazed. 10
 The blooming heath their couch, gazed
 side by side,
 In speechless admiration. I, a witness
 And frequent sharer of their calm delight
 With thankful heart, to either Eminence
 Gave the baptismal name each Sister bore.

POEMS OF THE FANCY

Now are they parted, far as Death's cold
hand
Hath power to part the Spirits of those¹⁶
who love
As they did love. Ye kindred Pinnacles—
That, while the generations of mankind
Follow each other to their hiding-place²⁰
In time's abyss, are privileged to endure
Beautiful in yourselves, and richly graced

With like command of beauty—grant
your aid
For MARY's humble, SARAH's silent
claim,¹
That their pure joy in nature may survive
From age to age in blended memory. 26

¹ MARY, the poet's wife; SARAH, her sister, who
died at Rydal Mount on June 23, 1835. See *Miscel-
laneous Sonnets*, I. XXIX.—ED.

POEMS OF THE FANCY

I

A MORNING EXERCISE

[Composed 1828.—Published 1832.]

FANCY, who leads the pastimes of the glad,
Full oft is pleased a wayward dart to
throw;
Sending sad shadows after things not sad,
Peopling the harmless fields with signs of
woe:
Beneath her sway, a simple forest cry⁵
Becomes an echo of man's misery.

Blithe ravens croak of death; and when
the owl
Tries his two voices for a favourite strain—
Tu-whit—Tu-whoo! the unsuspecting fowl
Forebodes mishap or seems but to com-
plain;¹⁰
Fancy, intent to harass and annoy,
Can thus pervert the evidence of joy.

Through border wilds where naked
Indians stray,
Myriads of notes attest her subtle skill;
A feathered task-master cries, 'WORK
AWAY!'¹⁵
And in thy iteration, 'WHIP POOR WILL!'¹
Is heard the spirit of a toil-worn slave,
Lashed out of life, not quiet in the grave.

What wonder? at her bidding, ancient
lays
Steeped in dire grief the voice of Philo-
mel;²⁰
And that fleet messenger of summer days,
The Swallow, twittered subject to like spell;
But ne'er could Fancy bend the buoyant
Lark
To melancholy service—hark! O hark!

The daisy sleeps upon the dewy lawn,²⁵
Not lifting yet the head that evening bowed;
But *He* is risen, a later star of dawn,
Glittering and twinkling near yon rosy
cloud;
Bright gem instinct with music, vocal
spark;
The happiest bird that sprang out of the
Ark!³⁰

¹ See Waterton's 'Wanderings in South America.'

Hail, blest above all kinds!—Supremely
skilled
Restless with fixed to balance, high with
low,
Thou leav'st the halcyon free her hopes to
build
On such forbearance as the deep may
show;
Perpetual flight, unchecked by earthly
ties,³⁵
Leav'st to the wandering bird of paradise.

Faithful, though swift as lightning, the
meek dove;
Yet more hath Nature reconciled in thee;
So constant with thy downward eye of
love,
Yet, in aerial singleness, so free;⁴⁰
So humble, yet so ready to rejoice
In power of wing and never-wearyed
voice.

To the last point of vision, and beyond,
Mount, daring warbler!—that love-
prompted strain,
(*'Twixt thee and thine a never-failing
bond,*⁴⁵
Thrills not the less the bosom of the plain:
Yet might'st thou seem, proud privilege!
to sing
All independent of the leafy spring.⁵

How would it please old Ocean to par-
take,⁴⁹
With sailors longing for a breeze in vain,
The harmony thy notes most gladly make
Where earth resembles most his own
domain!
Urania's self might welcome with pleased
ear
These matins mounting towards her na-
tive sphere.

Chanter by heaven attracted, whom no
bars⁵⁵
To daylight known deter from that pur-
suit,

This stanza was transferred in 1845 to its present
place from the poem (composed 1825; published
1827) *To a Skylark*, beginning,
'Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky.'—ED.

POEMS OF THE FANCY

'Tis well that some sage instinct, when
the stars
Come forth at evening, keeps Thee still
and mute;
For not an eyelid could to sleep incline
Wert thou among them, singing as they
shine! 60

II

A FLOWER GARDEN

AT COLEBORTON HALL, LEICESTERSHIRE

[Composed 1824.—Published 1827.]

TELL me, ye Zephyrs! that unfold,
While fluttering o'er this gay Recess,
Pinions that fanned the teeming mould
Of Eden's blissful wilderness,
Did only softly-stealing hours 5
There close the peaceful lives of flowers?

Say, when the *moving* creatures saw
All kinds commingled without fear,
Prevailed a like indulgent law
For the still growths that prosper here?
Did wanton fawn and kid forbear 11
The half-blown rose, the lily spare?

Or peeped they often from their beds,
And prematurely disappeared,
Devoured like pleasure ere it spreads 15
A bosom to the sun endeared?
If such their harsh untimely doom,
It falls not *here* on bud or bloom.

All summer-long the happy Eve
Of this fair Spot her flowers may bind, 20
Nor e'er, with ruffled fancy, grieve,
From the next glance she casts, to find
That love for little things by Fate
Is rendered vain as love for great.

Yet, where the guardian fence is wound, 25
So subtly are our eyes beguiled,
We see not nor suspect a bound,
No more than in some forest wild;
The sight is free as air—or crost
Only by art in nature lost. 30

And though the jealous turf refuse
By random footsteps to be prest,
And feed on never-sullied dews,
Ye, gentle breezes from the west,
With all the ministers of hope 35
Are tempted to this sunny slope!

And hither throngs of birds resort;
Some, inmates lodged in shady nests,
Some, perched on stems of stately port
That nod to welcome transient guests; 40
While hare and leveret, seen at play,
Appear not more shut out than they.

Apt emblem (for reproof of pride)
This delicate Enclosure shows
Of modest kindness, that would hide 45
The firm protection she bestows;

Of manners, like its viewless fence,
Ensuring peace to innocence.

Thus spake the moral Muse—her wing
Abruptly spreading to depart, 50
She left that farewell offering,
Memento for some docile heart;
That may respect the good old age
When Fancy was Truth's willing Page;
And Truth would skim the flowery glade,
Though entering but as Fancy's Shade. 56

III

[Composed March 18, 1798.—Published 1800.]

A WHIRL-BLAST from behind the hill
Rushed o'er the wood with startling
sound;

Then—all at once the air was still,
And showers of hailstones pattered
round.

Where leafless oaks towered high above, 5
I sat within an undergrove
Of tallest hollies, tall and green;
A fairer bower was never seen.
From year to year the spacious floor
With withered leaves is covered o'er, 10
And all the year the bower is green.

But see! where'er the hailstones drop
The withered leaves all skip and hop;
There's not a breeze—no breath of air—
Yet here, and there, and every where 15
Along the floor, beneath the shade
By those embowering hollies made,
The leaves in myriads jump and spring,
As if with pipes and music rare
Some Robin Good-fellow were there, 20
And all those leaves, in festive glee,
Were dancing to the minstrelsy.

IV

THE WATERFALL AND THE EGLANTINE

[Composed 1800.—Published 1800.]

I

'BEGONE, thou fond presumptuous Elf,'
Exclaimed an angry Voice,
'Nor dare to thrust thy foolish self
Between me and my choice!' 35
A small Cascade fresh swoln with snows 5
Thus threatened a poor Briar-rose,
That, all bespattered with his foam,
And dancing high and dancing low,
Was living, as a child might know,
In an unhappy home. 10

II

'Dost thou presume my course to block?
Off, off! or, puny Thing!
I'll hurl thee headlong with the rock
To which thy fibres cling.'

POEMS OF THE FANCY

The Flood was tyrannous and strong; 15
The patient Briar suffered long,
Nor did he utter groan or sigh,
Hoping the danger would be past;
But, seeing no relief, at last
He ventured to reply.

III

'Ah!' said the Briar, 'blame me not;
Why should we dwell in strife?
We who in this sequestered spot
Once lived a happy life!
You stirred me on my rocky bed— 25
What pleasure through my veins you
spread

The summer long, from day to day,
My leaves you freshened and bedewed;
Nor was it common gratitude
That did your cares repay.

IV

'When spring came on with bud and bell,
Among these rocks did I
Before you hang my wreaths to tell
That gentle days were nigh!
And in the sultry summer hours 35
I sheltered you with leaves and flowers;
And in my leaves—now shed and gone,
The linnet lodged, and for us two
Chanted his pretty songs, when you
Had little voice or none.

V

'But now proud thoughts are in your
breast—
What grief is mine you see,
Ah! would you think, even yet how blest
Together we might be!
Though of both leaf and flower bereft, 45
Some ornaments to me are left—
Rich store of scarlet hips is mine,
With which I, in my humble way,
Would deck you many a winter day,
A happy Eglantine!'

VI

What more he said I cannot tell,
The Torrent down the rocky dell
Came thundering loud and fast;
I listened, nor aught else could hear;
The Briar quaked—and much I fear 55
Those accents were his last.

V

THE OAK AND THE BROOM

A PASTORAL

[Composed 1800.—Published 1800.]

I

His simple truths did Andrew glean
Beside the babbling rills;
A careful student he had been
Among the woods and hills.

One winter's night, when through the
trees
The wind was roaring, on his knees 5
His youngest born did Andrew hold:
And while the rest, a ruddy quire,
Were seated round their blazing fire,
This Tale the Shepherd told. 10

II

'I saw a crag, a lofty stone
As ever tempest beat!
Out of its head an Oak had grown,
A Broom out of its feet.
The time was March, a cheerful noon— 15
The thaw-wind, with the breath of June,
Breathed gently from the warm south-
west:
When, in a voice sedate with age,
This Oak, a giant and a sage,
His neighbour thus addressed:— 20

III

"Eight weary weeks, through rock and
clay,
Along this mountain's edge,
The Frost had wrought both night and
day,
Wedge driving after wedge.
Look up! and think, above your head 25
What trouble, surely, will be bred;
Last night I heard a crash—'tis true,
The splinters took another road—
I see them yonder—what a load
For such a Thing as you! 30

IV

"You are preparing as before,
To deck your slender shape;
And yet, just three years back—no
more—
You had a strange escape:
Down from yon cliff a fragment broke; 35
It thundered down, with fire and smoke,
And hitherward pursued its way;
This ponderous block was caught by me,
And o'er your head, as you may see,
'Tis hanging to this day! 40

V

"If breeze or bird to this rough steep
Your kind's first seed did bear;
The breeze had better been asleep,
The bird caught in a snare:
For you and your green twigs decoy 45
The little witless shepherd-boy
To come and slumber in your bower;
And trust me, on some sultry noon,
Both you and he, Heaven knows how
soon!
Will perish in one hour. 50

POEMS OF THE FANCY

V

"From me this friendly warning take"—
The Broom began to doze,
And thus, to keep herself awake,
Did gently interpose:
"My thanks for your discourse are due;
That more than what you say is true 56
I know, and I have known it long;
Frail is the bond by which we hold
Our being, whether young or old,
Wise, foolish, weak, or strong.

VII

"Disasters, do the best we can,
Will reach both great and small;
And he is oft the wisest man,
Who is not wise at all.
For me, why should I wish to roam? 65
This spot is my paternal home,
It is my pleasant heritage;
My father many a happy year
Spread here his careless blossoms, here
Attained a good old age. 70

VIII

"Even such as his may be my lot.
What cause have I to haunt
My heart with terrors? Am I not
In truth a favoured plant!
On me such bounty Summer pours,
That I am covered o'er with flowers;
And when the Frost is in the sky,
My branches are so fresh and gay
That you might look at me and say,
This Plant can never die.

IX

"The butterfly, all green and gold,
To me hath often flown,
Here in my blossoms to behold
Wings lovely as his own.
When grass is chill with rain or dew, 85
Beneath my shade the mother-ewe
Lies with her infant lamb; I see
The love they to each other make,
And the sweet joy which they partake,
It is a joy to me." 90

X

"Her voice was blithe, her heart was light;
The Broom might have pursued
Her speech, until the stars of night
Their journey had renewed;
But in the branches of the oak 95
Two ravens now began to croak
Their nuptial song, a gladsome air;
And to her own green bower the breeze
That instant brought two stripling bees
To rest, or murmur there. 100

XI

"One night, my Children! from the north
There came a furious blast;
At break of day I ventured forth,
And near the cliff I passed.

The storm had fallen upon the Oak, 105
And struck him with a mighty stroke,
And whirled, and whirled him far away;
And, in one hospitable cleft,
The little careless Broom was left
To live for many a day." 110

VI

TO A SEXTON

[Composed 1799.—Published 1800.]

60 LET thy wheel-barrow alone—
Wherefore, Sexton, piling still
In thy bone-house bone on bone?
'Tis already like a hill
In a field of battle made, 5
Where three thousand skulls are laid;
These died in peace each with the other,—
Father, sister, friend, and brother.

Mark the spot to which I point!
From this platform, eight feet square, 10
Take not even a finger-joint:
Andrew's whole fire-side is there.
Here, alone, before thine eyes,
Simon's sickly daughter lies,
From weakness now and pain defended,
Whom he twenty winters tended. 16

Look but at the gardener's pride—
How he glories, when he sees 75
Roses, lilies, side by side,
Violets in families! 20
By the heart of Man, his tears,
By his hopes and by his fears,
Thou, too heedless, art the Warden
Of a far superior garden. 80

Thus then, each to other dear, 25
Let them all in quiet lie,
Andrew there, and Susan here,
Neighbours in mortality,
And should I live through sun and rain
Seven widowed years without my Jane,
O Sexton, do not then remove her, 31
Let one grave hold the Loved and Lover!

VII

TO THE DAISY

[Composed 1802.—Published 1807.]

'Her' divine skill taught me this,
That from every thing I saw
I could some instruction draw,
And raise pleasure to the height
Through the meanest object's sight.
By the murmur of a spring,
Or the least bough's rustelling;
By a Daisy whose leaves spread
Shut when Titan goes to bed;
Or a shady bush or tree;
She could more infuse in me
Than all Nature's beauties can
In some other wiser man."

G. WITHER.

In youth from rock to rock I went,
From hill to hill in discontent
Of pleasure high and turbulent,
His Muse.

POEMS OF THE FANCY

Most pleased when most uneasy;
But now my own delights I make,—
My thirst at every rill can slake,
And gladly Nature's love partake
Of Thee, sweet Daisy!

Thee Winter in the garland wears
That thinly decks his few grey hairs; 10
Spring parts the clouds with softest airs,
That she may sun thee;
Whole Summer-fields are thine by right;
And Autumn, melancholy Wight!
Doth in thy crimson head delight 15
When rains are on thee.

In shoals and bands, a morrice train,
Thou greet'st the traveller in the lane;
Pleased at his greeting thee again;
Yet nothing daunted, 20
Nor grieved if thou be set at nought;
And oft alone in nooks remote
We meet thee, like a pleasant thought,
When such are wanted.

Be violets in their secret mews 25
The flowers the wanton Zephyrs choose;
Proud be the rose, with rains and dews
Her head impearling,
Thou liv'st with less ambitious aim,
Yet hast not gone without thy fame; 30
Thou art indeed by many a claim
The Poet's darling.

If to a rock from rains he fly,
Or, some bright day of April sky,
Imprisoned by hot sunshine lie 35
Near the green holly,
And wearily at length should fare;
He needs but look about, and there
Thou art!—a friend at hand, to scare
His melancholy.

A hundred times, by rock or bower,
Ere thus I have lain couched an hour,
Have I derived from thy sweet power
Some apprehension;
Some steady love; some brief delight; 45
Some memory that had taken flight;
Some chime of fancy wrong or right;
Or stray invention.

If stately passions in me burn,
And one chance look to Thee should turn,
I drink out of an humbler urn 51
A lowlier pleasure;
The homely sympathy that heeds
The common life our nature breeds;
A wisdom fitted to the needs
Of hearts at leisure.

Fresh-smitten by the morning ray,
When thou art up, alert and gay,
Then, cheerful Flower! my spirits play

With kindred gladness: 60
And when, at dusk, by dews oppress
Thou sink'st, the image of thy rest
Hath often eased my pensive breast
Of careful sadness.

And all day long I number yet, 65
All seasons through, another debt,
Which I, wherever thou art met,
To thee am owing;
An instinct call it, a blind sense;
A happy, genial influence, 70
Coming one knows not how, nor whence,
Nor whither going.

Child of the Year! that round dost run
Thy pleasant course,—when day's begun
As ready to salute the sun 75
As lark or leveret,
Thy long-lost praise thou shalt regain;
Nor be less dear to future men
Than in old time;—thou not in vain
Art Nature's favourite.¹ 80

VIII

TO THE SAME FLOWER

[Composed 1802.—Published 1807.]

WITH little here to do or see
Of things that in the great world be,
Daisy! again I talk to thee,
For thou art worthy, 5
Thou unassuming Common-place
Of Nature, with that homely face,
And yet with something of a grace
Which love makes for thee!

Oft on the dappled turf at ease
I sit, and play with smiles, 10
Loose types of things through all degrees,
Thoughts of thy raising:
And many a fond and idle name
I give to thee, for praise or blame,
As is the humour of the game, 15
While I am gazing.

A nun demure of lowly port;
Or sprightly maiden, of Love's court,
In thy simplicity the sport
Of all temptations; 20
A queen in crown of rubies drest;
A starveling in a scanty vest;
Are all, as seems to suit thee best,
Thy appellations.

A little Cyclops with one eye 25
Staring to threaten and defv.
That thought comes next—and instantly
The freak is over,
The shape will vanish—and behold
A silver shield with boss of gold, 30
That spreads itself, some faery bold
In fight to cover!

¹ See, in Chaucer and the elder Poets, the honours formerly paid to this flower.

POEMS OF THE FANCY

I see thee glittering from afar—
And then thou art a pretty star;
Not quite so fair as many are
In heaven above thee!
Yet like a star, with glittering crest,
Self-poised in air thou seem'st to rest;—
May peace come never to his nest,
Who shall reprove thee!
Bright *Flower!* for by that name at last,
When all my reveries are past,
I call thee, and to that cleave fast,
Sweet silent creature!
That breath'st with me in sun and air, 45
Do thou, as thou art wont, repair
My heart with gladness, and a share
Of thy meek nature!

IX

THE GREEN LINNET

[Composed 1803.—Published 1807.]

BENEATH these fruit-tree boughs that shed
Their snow-white blossoms on my head,
With brightest sunshine round me spread
Of spring's unclouded weather,
In this sequestered nook how sweet 5
To sit upon my orchard-seat!
And birds and flowers once more to greet,
My last year's friends together.

One have I marked, the happiest guest
In all this covert of the blest: 10
Hail to Thee, far above the rest
In joy of voice and pinion!
Thou, Linnet! in thy green array,
Presiding Spirit here to-day,
Dost lead the revels of the May; 15
And this is thy dominion.

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers,
Make all one band of paramours,
Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
Art sole in thy employment: 20
A Life, a Presence like the Air,
Scattering thy gladness without care,
Too blest with any one to pair;
Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Amid yon tuft of hazel trees, 25
That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
Behold him perched in ecstasies,
Yet seeming still to hover;
There! where the flutter of his wings
Upon his back and body flings 30
Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
That cover him all over.

My dazzled sight he oft deceives,
A Brother of the dancing leaves;
Then flits, and from the cottage eaves 35
Pours forth his song in gushes;
As if by that exulting strain
He mocked and treated with disdain
The voiceless Form he chose to feign, 40
While fluttering in the bushes.

X

TO A SKY-LARK

[Composed 1805.—Published 1807.]

Up with me! up with me into the clouds!
For thy song, Lark, is strong;
Up with me, up with me into the clouds!
Singing, singing,
With clouds and sky about thee ringing, 5
Lift me, guide me, till I find
That spot which seems so to thy mind!

I have walked through wildernesses dreary,
And to-day my heart is weary;
Had I now the wings of a Faery, 10
Up to thee would I fly.
There is madness about thee, and joy divine
In that song of thine;
Lift me, guide me, high and high
To thy banquetting place in the sky. 15

Joyous as morning,
Thou art laughing and scorning;
Thou hast a nest for thy love and thy rest,
And, though little troubled with sloth,
Drunken Lark! thou wouldst be loth
To be such a traveller as I. 21
Happy, happy Liver,
With a soul as strong as a mountain river
Pouring out praise to the almighty Giver,
Joy and jollity be with us both! 25

Alas! my journey, rugged and uneven,
Through prickly moors or dusty ways
must wind;
But hearing thee, or others of thy kind,
As full of gladness and as free of heaven, 30
I, with my fate contented, will plod on,
And hope for higher raptures, when life's
day is done.

XI

TO THE SMALL CELANDINE¹

[Composed April 30, 1802.—Published 1807.]

PANSIES, lilies, kingcups, daisies,
Let them live upon their praises;
Long as there's a sun that sets,
Primroses will have their glory;
Long as there are violets, 5
They will have a place in story:
There's a flower that shall be mine,
'Tis the little Celandine.

Eyes of some men travel far
For the finding of a star; 10
Up and down the heavens they go,
Men that keep a mighty rout!
I'm as great as they, I trow,
Since the day I found thee out,
Little Flower—I'll make a stir, 15
Like a sage astronomer.

¹ Common Pilewort.

POEMS OF THE FANCY

Modest, yet withal an Elf
 Bold, and lavish of thyself;
 Since we needs must first have met
 I have seen thee, high and low,
 Thirty years or more, and yet
 'Twas a face I did not know;
 Thou hast now, go where I may,
 Fifty greetings in a day.

Ere a leaf is on a bush,
 In the time before the thrush
 Has a thought about her nest,
 Thou wilt come with half a cail,
 Spreading out thy glossy breast
 Like a careless Prodigal;
 Telling tales about the sun,
 When we've little warmth, or none.

Poets, vain men in their mood!
 Travel with the multitude:
 Never heed them; I aver
 That they all are wanton wooers;
 But the thrifty cottager,
 Who stirs little out of doors,
 Joys to spy thee near her home;
 Spring is coming, Thou art come!

Comfort have thou of thy merit,
 Kindly, unassuming Spirit!
 Careless of thy neighbourhood,
 Thou dost show thy pleasant face
 On the moor, and in the wood,
 In the lane;—there's not a place,
 Howsoever mean it be,
 But 'tis good enough for thee.

Ill befall the yellow flowers,
 Children of the flaring hours!
 Buttercups, that will be seen,
 Whether we will see or no;
 Others, too, of lofty mien;
 They have done as worldlings do,
 Taken praise that should be thine,
 Little, humble Celandine.

Prophet of delight and mirth,
 Ill-requited upon earth;
 Herald of a mighty band,
 Of a joyous train ensuing,
 Serving at my heart's command,
 Tasks that are no tasks renewing,
 I will sing, as doth behove,
 Hymns in praise of what I love!

XII

TO THE SAME FLOWER

[Composed May 1, 1802.—Published 1807.]

PLEASURES newly found are sweet
 When they lie about our feet:
 February last, my heart
 First at sight of thee was glad;
 All unheard of as thou art,
 Thou must needs, I think, have had,
 Celandine! and long ago,
 Praise of which I nothing know.

I have not a doubt but he,
 Whosoe'er the man might be, 10
 Who the first with pointed rays
 (Workman worthy to be sainted)

Set the sign-board in a blaze,
 When the rising sun he painted,
 Took the fancy from a glance 15
 At thy glittering countenance.

Soon as gentle breezes bring
 News of winter's vanishing,
 And the children build their bowers, 20
 Sticking 'kerchief-plots of mould

All about with full-blown flowers,
 Thick as sheep in shepherd's fold!
 With the proudest thou art there,
 Mantling in the tiny square.

Often have I sighed to measure 25
 By myself a lonely pleasure,
 Sighed to think I read a book
 Only read, perhaps, by me;

Yet I long could overlook
 Thy bright coronet and Thee, 30
 And thy arch and wily ways,
 And thy store of other praise.

Blithe of heart, from week to week
 Thou dost play at hide-and-seek
 While the patient primrose sits 35
 Like a beggar in the cold,

Thou, a flower of wiser wits,
 Slip'st into thy sheltering hold;
 Liveliest of the vernal train
 When ye all are out again. 40

Drawn by what peculiar spell,
 By what charm of sight or smell,
 Does the dim-eyed curious Bee, 45
 Labouring for her waxen cells,

Fondly settle upon Thee
 Pried above all buds and bells
 Opening daily at thy side,
 By the season multiplied? 55

Thou art not beyond the moon,
 But a thing 'beneath our shoon;' 50
 Let the bold Discoverer thrid
 In his bark the polar sea;

Rear who will a pyramid;
 Praise it is enough for me,
 If there be but three or four 55
 Who will love my little Flower.

XIII

THE SEVEN SISTERS

OR

THE SOLITUDE OF BINNORIE

[Composed before August 17, 1800.—
 Published 1807.]

I

5 SEVEN Daughters had Lord Archibald,
 All children of one mother:
 You could not say in one short day
 What love they bore each other.

POEMS OF THE FANCY

A garland of seven lilies wrought!
Seven Sisters that together dwell;
But he, bold Knight as ever fought,
Their Father, took of them no thought,
He loved the wars so well:
Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie!

II

Fresh blows the wind, a western wind,
And from the shores of Erin,
Across the wave, a Rover brave
To Binnorie is steering:
Right onward to the Scottish strand
The gallant ship is borne;
The warriors leap upon the land,
And hark! the Leader of the band
Hath blown his bugle horn.
Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie.

III

Beside a grotto of their own,
With boughs above them closing,
The Seven are laid, and in the shade
They lie like fawns reposing.
But now, upstarting with affright
At noise of man and steed,
Away they fly to left, to right—
Of your fair household, Father-knight,
Methinks you take small heed!
Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie.

IV

Away the seven fair Campbells fly,
And over hill and hollow,
With menace proud, and insult loud,
The youthful Rovers follow.
Cried they, 'Your Father loves to roam:
Enough for him to find
The empty house when he comes home;
For us your yellow ringlets comb,
For us be fair and kind!'
Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie.

V

Some close behind, some side by side,
Like clouds in stormy weather;
They run, and cry, 'Nay, let us die,
And let us die together.'
A lake was near; the shore was steep;
There never foot had been;
They ran, and with a desperate leap
Together plunged into the deep,
Nor ever more were seen.
Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully,
The solitude of Binnorie.

VI

The stream that flows out of the lake,
As through the glen it rambles,
Repeats a moan o'er moss and stone,
For those seven lovely Campbells.

5 Seven little Islands, green and bare, 60
Have risen from out the deep:
The fishers say, those sisters fair
By faeries all are buried there,
And there together sleep.
10 Sing, mournfully, oh! mournfully, 65
The solitude of Binnorie.

XIV

[Composed 1803.—Published 1807.]

Who fancied what a pretty sight
15 This Rock would be if edged around
With living snow-drops? circlet bright!
How glorious to this orchard-ground!
Who loved the little Rock, and set 5
Upon its head this coronet?

20 Was it the humour of a child?
Or rather of some gentle maid,
Whose brows, the day that she was styled
The shepherd-queen, were thus arrayed?
Of man mature, or matron sage? 11
Or old man toying with his age?

I asked—'twas whispered; The device
To each and all might well belong:
It is the Spirit of Paradise 15
That prompts such work, a Spirit strong,
That gives to all the self-same bent
Where life is wise and innocent.

XV

THE REDBREAST CHASING THE BUTTERFLY

[Composed April 18, 1802.—Published 1807.]

ART thou the bird whom Man loves best
35 The pious bird with the scarlet breast,
Our little English Robin;
The bird that comes about our doors
When Autumn-winds are sobbing? 5
Art thou the Peter of Norway Boors?
Their Thomas in Finland,
And Russia far inland?

The bird that by some name or other
All men who know thee call their brother,
The darling of children and men? 11
Could Father Adam¹ open his eyes
And see this sight beneath the skies,
He'd wish to close them again.
—If the Butterfly knew but his friend, 15
Hither his flight he would bend;
And find his way to me,
Under the branches of the tree:
In and out, he darts about;
Can this be the bird, to man so good, 20
55 That, after their bewildering,
Covered with leaves the little children,
So painfully in the wood?

¹ See 'Paradise Lost', Book XI, where Adam points out to Eve the ominous sign of the Eagle chasing 'two Birds of gayest plume', and the gentle Hart and Hind pursued by their enemy.

POEMS OF THE FANCY

What ailed thee, Robin, that thou couldst
 pursue
 A beautiful creature,
 That is gentle by nature?
 Beneath the summer sky
 From flower to flower let him fly;
 'Tis all that he wishes to do.
 The cheerer Thou of our in-door sad-
 ness,
 He is the friend of our summer gladness:
 What hinders, then, that ye should be
 Playmates in the sunny weather,
 And fly about in the air together!
 His beautiful wings in crimson are
 drest,
 A crimson as bright as thine own:
 Wouldst thou be happy in thy nest,
 O pious Bird! whom man loves best,
 Love him, or leave him alone!

XVI

SONG FOR THE SPINNING WHEEL

FOUNDED UPON A BELIEF PREVALENT
 AMONG THE PASTORAL VALES OF
 WESTMORELAND

[Composed 1812.—Published 1820.]

SWIFTLY turn the murmuring wheel!
 Night has brought the welcome hour,
 When the weary fingers feel
 Help, as if from fairy power;
 Dewy night o'ershades the ground;
 Turn the swift wheel round and round!

Now, beneath the starry sky,
 Couch the widely-scattered sheep;—
 Ply the pleasant labour, ply!
 For the spindle, while they sleep,
 Runs with speed more smooth and fine,
 Gathering up a trustier line.

Short-lived likings may be bred
 By a glance from fickle eyes;
 But true love is like the thread
 Which the kindly wool supplies,
 When the flocks are all at rest,
 Sleeping on the mountain's breast.

XVII

HINT FROM THE MOUNTAINS

FOR CERTAIN POLITICAL PRETENDERS

[Composed 1817.—Published 1820.]

'Who but hails the sight with pleasure
 When the wings of genius rise,
 Their ability to measure
 With great enterprise;
 But in man was ne'er such daring
 As yon Hawk exhibits, pairing
 His brave spirit with the war in
 The stormy skies!

'Mark him, how his power he uses,
 Lays it by, at will resumes!
 Mark, ere for his haunt he chooses
 Clouds and utter glooms!
 There he wheels in downward mazes;
 Sunward now his flight he raises,
 Catches fire, as seems, and blazes
 With uninjured plumes!'

ANSWER

'Stranger, 'tis no act of courage
 Which aloft thou dost discern;
 No bold *bird* gone forth to forage
 'Mid the tempest stern;
 But such mockery as the nations
 See, when public perturbations
 Lift men from their native stations,
 Like yon TUFT OF FERN;

'Such it is; the aspiring creature
 Soaring on undaunted wing,
 (So you fancied) is by nature
 A dull helpless thing,
 Dry and withered, light and yellow;—
That to be the tempest's fellow!
 Wait—and you shall see how hollow
 Its endeavouring!'

XVIII

ON SEEING A NEEDLECASE IN THE FORM OF A HARP

THE WORK OF E. M. S.

[Composed 1827.—Published 1827.]

FROWNS are on every Muse's face,
 Reproaches from their lips are sent,
 That mimicry should thus disgrace
 The noble Instrument.

A very Harp in all but size!
 Needles for strings in apt gradation!
 Minerva's self would stigmatize
 The unclassic profanation.

Even her *own* needle that subdued
 Arachne's rival spirit,
 Though wrought in Vulcan's happiest
 mood,
 Such honour could not merit.

And this too from the Laureate's Child,
 A living lord of melody!
 How will her Sire be reconciled
 To the refined indignity?

I spake, when whispered a low voice,
 'Bard! moderate your ire;
 Spirits of all degrees rejoice
 In presence of the lyre.

'The Minstrels of Pygmean bands,
 Dwarf Genii, moonlight-loving Fays,
 Have shells to fit their tiny hands
 And suit their slender lays.

POEMS OF THE FANCY

'Some, still more delicate of ear,
Have lutes (believe my words)
Whose framework is of gossamer,
While sunbeams are the chords.

'Gay Sylphs this miniature will court,
Made vocal by their brushing wings, 30
And sullen Gnomes will learn to sport
Around its polished strings;

'Whence strains to love-sick maiden dear,
While in her lonely bower she tries
To cheat the thought she cannot cheer,
By fanciful embroideries. 36

'Trust, angry Bard! a knowing Sprite,
Nor think the Harp her lot deplores;
Though 'mid the stars the Lyre shine
bright,
Love stoops as fondly as he soars.' 40

XIX

TO A LADY

IN ANSWER TO A REQUEST THAT I WOULD
WRITE HER A POEM UPON SOME DRAW-
INGS THAT SHE HAD MADE OF FLOWERS
IN THE ISLAND OF MADEIRA

[Composed 1845 (?).—Published 1845.]

FAIR Lady! can I sing of flowers
That in Madeira bloom and fade,
I who ne'er sate within their bowers,
Nor through their sunny lawns have
strayed?
How they in sprightly dance are worn 5
By Shepherd-groom or May-day queen,
Or holy festal pomps adorn,
These eyes have never seen.

Yet tho' to me the pencil's art
No like remembrances can give, 10
Your portraits still may reach the heart
And there for gentle pleasure live;
While Fancy ranging with free scope
Shall on some lovely Alien set
A name with us endeared to hope, 15
To peace, or fond regret.

Still as we look with nicer care,
Some new resemblance we may trace:
A *Heart's-ease* will perhaps be there,
A *Speedwell* may not want its place. 20
And so may we, with charmed mind
Beholding what your skill has wrought,
Another *Star-of-Bethlehem* find,
A new *Forget-me-not*.

From earth to heaven with motion fleet
From heaven to earth our thoughts will
pass, 26
A *Holy-thistle* here we meet
And there a *Shepherd's weather-glass*;

25 And haply some familiar name
Shall grace the fairest, sweetest, plant
Whose presence cheers the drooping
frame
Of English Emigrant. 31

Gazing she feels its power beguile
Sad thoughts, and breathes with easier
breath;
Alas! that meek, that tender smile 35
Is but a harbinger of death:
And pointing with a feeble hand
She says, in faint words by sighs
broken,
Bear for me to my native land
This precious Flower, true love's last
token. 40

XX

[Composed 1845 (?).—Published 1845.]

GLAD sight wherever new with old
Is joined through some dear homeborn
tie;
The life of all that we behold
Depends upon that mystery.
Vain is the glory of the sky, 5
The beauty vain of field and grove,
Unless, while with admiring eye
We gaze, we also learn to love.

XXI

THE CONTRAST

THE PARROT AND THE WREN

[Composed 1825.—Published 1827.]

I

WITHIN her gilded cage confined
I saw a dazzling Belle,
A Parrot of that famous kind
Whose name is NON-PAREIL.

Like beads of glossy jet her eyes; 5
And, smoothed by Nature's skill,
With pearl or gleaming agate vies
Her finely-curved bill.

Her plumy mantle's living hues,
In mass opposed to mass, 10
Outshine the splendour that imbues
The robes of pictured glass.

And, sooth to say, an apter Mate
Did never tempt the choice
Of feathered Thing most delicate 15
In figure and in voice.

But, exiled from Australian bowers,
And singleness her lot,
She trills her song with tutored powers,
Or mocks each casual note. 20

POEMS OF THE FANCY

No more of pity for regrets
With which she may have striven!
Now but in wantonness she frets,
Or spite, if cause be given;

Arch, volatile, a sportive bird
By social glee inspired;
Ambitious to be seen or heard,
And pleased to be admired!

II

This moss-lined shed, green, soft, and dry,
Harbours a self-contented Wren,
Not shunning man's abode, though shy,
Almost as thought itself, of human ken.

Strange places, coverts unendeared,
She never tried; the very nest
In which this Child of Spring was reared
Is warmed thro' winter by her feathery
breast.

To the bleak winds she sometimes gives
A slender unexpected strain;
Proof that the hermitess still lives,
Though she appear not, and be sought in
vain.

Say, Dora! tell me, by yon placid moon,
If called to choose between the favoured
pair,
Which would you be,—the bird of the
saloon,

By lady-fingers tended with nice care,
Caressed, applauded, upon dainties fed,
Or Nature's DARKLING of this mossy
shed?

XXII

THE DANISH BOY

A FRAGMENT

[Composed 1799.—Published 1800.]

I

BETWEEN two sister moorland rills
There is a spot that seems to lie
Sacred to flowerets of the hills,
And sacred to the sky.
And in this smooth and open dell
There is a tempest-stricken tree;
A corner-stone by lightning cut,
The last stone of a lonely hut;
And in this dell you see
A thing no storm can e'er destroy,
The shadow of a Danish Boy.

II

In clouds above, the lark is heard,
But drops not here to earth for rest;
Within this lonesome nook the bird
Did never build her nest.
No beast, no bird, hath here his home;

Bees, wafted on the breezy air,
Pass high above those fragrant bells
To other flowers:—to other dells
Their burdens do they bear;
The Danish Boy walks here alone:
The lovely dell is all his own.

III

A Spirit of noon-day is he;
Yet seems a form of flesh and blood;
Nor piping shepherd shall he be,
Nor herd-boy of the wood.
A regal vest of fur he wears,
In colour like a raven's wing;
It fears not rain, nor wind, nor dew;
But in the storm 'tis fresh and blue
As budding pines in spring;
His helmet has a vernal grace,
Fresh as the bloom upon his face.

IV

A harp is from his shoulder slung;
Resting the harp upon his knee,
To words of a forgotten tongue
He suits its melody.
Of flocks upon the neighbouring hill
He is the darling and the joy;
And often, when no cause appears,
The mountain-ponies prick their ears,
—They hear the Danish Boy,
While in the dell he sings alone
Beside the tree and corner-stone.

V

There sits he; in his face you spy
No trace of a ferocious air,
Nor ever was a cloudless sky
So steady or so fair.
The lovely Danish Boy is blest
And happy in his flowery cove;
From bloody deeds his thoughts are far;
And yet he warbles songs of war,
That seem like songs of love,
For calm and gentle is his mien;
Like a dead Boy he is serene.

XXIII

SONG

FOR THE WANDERING JEW

[Composed 1800.—Published 1800.]

THOUGH the torrents from their fountains
Roar down many a craggy steep,
Yet they find among the mountains
Resting-places calm and deep.

Clouds that love through air to hasten,
Ere the storm its fury stills,
Helmet-like themselves will fasten
On the heads of towering hills.

What if through the frozen centre
Of the Alps the Chamol's bound,
Yet he has a home to enter
In some nook of chosen ground:

POEMS OF THE FANCY

And the Sea-horse, though the ocean
Yield him no domestic cave,
Slumbers without sense of motion,
Couched upon the rocking wave.

If on windy days the Raven
Gambol like a dancing skiff,
Not the less she loves her haven
In the bosom of the cliff.

The fleet Ostrich, till day closes,
Vagrant over desert sands,
Brooding on her eggs reposes
When chill night that care demands.

Day and night my toils redouble,
Never nearer to the goal;
Night and day, I feel the trouble
Of the Wanderer in my soul.

XXIV

STRAY PLEASURES

[Composed 1806.—Published 1807.]

*—*Pleasure is spread through the earth
In stray gifts to be claimed by whoever shall find.*

By their floating mill,
That lies dead and still,
Behold yon Prisoners three,
The Miller with two Dames, on the breast
of the Thames!
The platform is small, but gives room for
them all;
And they're dancing merrily.

From the shore come the notes
To their mill where it floats,
To their house and their mill tethered
fast:
To the small wooden isle where, their
work to beguile,
They from morning to even take what-
ever is given;—
And many a blithe day they have past.

In sight of the spires,
All alive with the fires
Of the sun going down to his rest,
In the broad open eye of the solitary sky,
They dance,—there are three, as jocund
as free,
While they dance on the calm river's
breast.

Man and Maidens wheel,
They themselves make the reel,
And their music's a prey which they
seize;
It plays not for them,—what matter? 'tis
theirs;
And if they had care, it has scattered
their cares
While they dance, crying, 'Long as ye
please!'

They dance not for me, 25
Yet mine is their glee!
Thus pleasure is spread through the earth
In stray gifts to be claimed by whoever
shall find;
Thus a rich loving-kindness, redundantly
kind,
Moves all nature to gladness and mirth.

The showers of the spring 31
Rouse the birds, and they sing;
If the wind do but stir for his proper
delight,
Each leaf, that and this, his neighbour
will kiss;
Each wave, one and t'other, speeds after
his brother;
They are happy, for that is their right! 35

XXV

THE PILGRIM'S DREAM

OR, THE STAR AND THE GLOW-WORM

[Composed 1818.—Published 1820.]

A PILGRIM, when the summer day
Had closed upon his weary way,
A lodging begged beneath a castle's roof;
But him the haughty Warder spurned;
And from the gate the Pilgrim turned, 5
To seek such covert as the field
Or heath-besprinkled copse might yield,
Or lofty wood, shower-proof.

He paced along; and pensively,
Halting beneath a shady tree, 10
Whose moss-grown root might serve for
couch or seat,
Fixed on a Star his upward eye;
Then from the tenant of the sky
He turned, and watched with kindred
look
A Glow-worm, in a dusky nook, 15
Apparent at his feet.

The murmur of a neighbouring stream
Induced a soft and slumbrous dream,
A pregnant dream, within whose shadowy
bounds
He recognised the earth-born Star, 20
And *That* which glittered from afar;
And (strange to witness!) from the frame
Of the ethereal Orb there came
Intelligible sounds.

Much did it taunt the humble Light 25
That now, when day was fled, and night
Hushed the dark earth, fast closing weary
eyes,
A very reptile could presume
To show her taper in the gloom,
As if in rivalry with One 30
Who sat a ruler on his throne
Erected in the skies.

POEMS OF THE FANCY

'Exalted Star!' the Worm replied,
'Abate this unbecoming pride,
Or with a less uneasy lustre shine; 25
Thou shrink'st as momentarily thy rays
Are mastered by the breathing haze;
While neither mist, nor thickest cloud
That shapes in heaven its murky shroud,
Hath power to injure mine. 40

'But not for this do I aspire
To match the spark of local fire,
That at my will burns on the dewy lawn,
With thy acknowledged glories;—No!
Yet, thus upbraided, I may show 45
What favours do attend me here,
Till, like thyself, I disappear
Before the purple dawn.'

When this in modest guise was said,
Across the welkin seemed to spread 50
A boding sound—for aught but sleep
unfit!

Hills quaked, the rivers backward ran;
That Star, so proud of late, looked wan;
And reeled with visionary stir
In the blue depth, like Lucifer 55
Cast headlong to the pit!

Fire raged: and, when the spangled floor
Of ancient ether was no more,
New heavens succeeded, by the dream
brought forth:

And all the happy Souls that rode 60
Transfigured through that fresh abode
Had heretofore, in humble trust,
Shone meekly 'mid their native dust,
The Glow-worms of the earth!

This knowledge, from an Angel's voice
Proceeding, made the heart rejoice 66
Of Him who slept upon the open lea:
Waking at morn he murmured not;
And, till life's journey closed, the spot
Was to the Pilgrim's soul endeared, 70
Where by that dream he had been cheered
Beneath the shady tree.

XXVI

THE POET AND THE CAGED TURTLEDOVE

[Composed 1830.—Published 1835.]

As often as I murmur here
My half-formed melodies,
Straight from her osier mansion near
The Turtle-dove replies:
Though silent as a leaf before,
The captive promptly coos;
Is it to teach her own soft lore,
Or second my weak Muse?

I rather think the gentle Dove
Is murmuring a reproof,
Displeased that I from lays of love
Have dared to keep aloof;

That I, a Bard of hill and dale,
Have carolled, fancy free, 15
As if nor dove nor nightingale
Had heart or voice for me.

If such thy meaning, O forbear,
Sweet Bird! to do me wrong;
Love, blessed Love, is everywhere
The spirit of my song: 20
'Mid grove, and by the calm fireside,
Love animates my lyre—
That coo again!—'tis not to chide,
I feel, but to inspire.

XXVII

A WREN'S NEST

[Composed 1833.—Published 1835.]

AMONG the dwellings framed by birds
In field or forest with nice care,
Is none that with the little Wren's
In snugness may compare.

No door the tenement requires, 5
And seldom needs a labour'd roof;
Yet is it to the fiercest sun
Impervious, and storm-proof.

So warm, so beautiful withal,
In perfect fitness for its aim, 10
That to the Kind by special grace
Their instinct surely came.

And when for their abodes they seek
An opportune recess,
The hermit has no finer eye 15
For shadowy quietness.

These find, 'mid ivied abbey-walls,
A canopy in some still nook;
Others are pent-housed by a brae
That overhangs a brook. 20

There to the brooding bird her mate
Warbles by fits his low clear song;
And by the busy streamlet both
Are sung to all day long.

Or in sequestered lanes they build, 25
Where, till the fitting bird's return,
Her eggs within the nest repose,
Like relics in an urn.

But still, where general choice is good,
There is a better and a best; 30
And, among fairest objects, some
Are fairer than the rest;

5 This, one of those small builders proved
In a green covert, where, from out
The forehead of a pollard oak, 35
The leafy antlers sprout;

For She who planned the mossy lodge, 40
Mistrusting her evasive skill,
Had to a Primrose looked for aid
Her wishes to fulfil.

POEMS OF THE FANCY

High on the trunk's projecting brow,
And fixed an infant's span above
The budding flowers, peeped forth the
nest
The prettiest of the grove!

The treasure proudly did I show 45
To some whose minds without disdain
Can turn to little things; but once
Looked up for it in vain:

'Tis gone—a ruthless spoiler's prey, 49
Who heeds not beauty, love, or song,
'Tis gone! (so seemed it) and we grieved
Indignant at the wrong.

Just three days after, passing by
In clearer light the moss-built cell
I saw, espied its shaded mouth; 55
And felt that all was well.

The Primrose for a veil had spread
The largest of her upright leaves;
And thus, for purposes benign,
A simple flower deceives. 60

Concealed from friends who might dis-
turb
Thy quiet with no ill intent,
Secure from evil eyes and hands
On barbarous plunder bent, 64

Rest, Mother-bird! and when thy young
Take flight, and thou art free to roam,
When withered is the guardian Flower,
And empty thy late home,

Think how ye prospered, thou and thine,
Amid the unviolated grove 70
Housed near the growing Primrose-tuft
In foresight, or in love.

XXVIII

LOVE LIES BLEEDING

[Composed 1842 (?).—Published 1842.]

You call it, 'Love lies bleeding,'—so you
may,
Though the red Flower, not prostrate,
only droops,
As we have seen it here from day to day,
From month to month, life passing not
away:
A flower how rich in sadness! Even thus
stoops, 5
(Sentient by Grecian sculpture's marvel-
lous power),
Thus leans, with hanging brow and body
bent
Earthward in uncomplaining languish-
ment,
The dying Gladiator. So, sad Flower!

('Tis Fancy guides me willing to be led,
Though by a slender thread,) 11
So drooped Adonis, bathed in sanguine
dew
Of his death-wound, when he from inno-
cent air
The gentlest breath of resignation drew;
While Venus in a passion of despair 15
Rent, weeping over him, her golden hair
Spangled with drops of that celestial
shower.
She suffered, as Immortals sometimes do;
But pangs more lasting far that Lover
knew
Who first, weighed down by scorn, in
some lone bower 20
Did press this semblance of unpitied
smart
Into the service of his constant heart,
His own dejection, downcast Flower!
could share
With thine, and gave the mournful name
which thou wilt ever bear.

XXIX

COMPANION TO THE FOREGOING

[Composed 1842 (?).—Published 1842.]

NEVER enlivened with the liveliest ray
That fosters growth or checks or cheers
decay,
Nor by the heaviest rain-drops more
deprest,
This Flower, that first appeared as sum-
mer's guest,
Preserves her beauty 'mid autumnal
leaves, 5
And to her mournful habits fondly
cleaves.
When files of stateliest plants have ceased
to bloom,
One after one submitting to their doom,
When her coevals each and all are fled,
What keeps her thus reclined upon her
lonesome bed? 10

The old mythologists, more impressed
than we
Of this late day by character in tree
Or herb that claimed peculiar sympathy,
Or by the silent lapse of fountain clear,
Or with the language of the viewless air
By bird or beast made vocal, sought a
cause 16
To solve the mystery, not in Nature's laws
But in Man's fortunes. Hence a thousand
tales
Sung to the plaintive lyre in Grecian
vales.
Nor doubt that something of their spirit
swayed 20
The fancy-stricken Youth or heart-sick
Maid,

POEMS OF THE FANCY

Who, while each stood companionless
and eyed
This undeparting Flower in crimson dyed,
Thought of a wound which death is slow
to cure, 24
A fate that has endured and will endure,
And, patience coveting yet passion feed-
ing,
Called the dejected Lingerer *Love lies*
Bleeding.

XXX

RURAL ILLUSIONS

[Composed 1832.—Published 1835.]

SYLPH was it? or a Bird more bright
Than those of fabulous stock?
A second darted by;—and lo!
Another of the flock,
Through sunshine flitting from the bough
To nestle in the rock. 6
Transient deception! a gay freak
Of April's mimicries!
Those brilliant strangers, hailed with joy
Among the budding trees, 10
Proved last year's leaves, pushed from the
spray
To frolic on the breeze.

Maternal Flora! show thy face,
And let thy hand be seen,
Thy hand here sprinkling tiny flowers,
That, as they touch the green, 16
Take root (so seems it) and look up
In honour of their Queen.
Yet, sooth, those little starry specks,
That not in vain aspired 20
To be confounded with live growths,
Most dainty, most admired,
Were only blossoms dropped from twigs
Of their own offspring tired.

Not such the World's illusive shows; 25
Her wingless flutterings,
Her blossoms which, though shed, out-
brave
The floweret as it springs,
For the undeceived, smile as they may,
Are melancholy things: 30
But gentle Nature plays her part
With ever-varying wiles,
And transient feignings with plain truth
So well she reconciles,
That those fond Idlers most are pleased
Whom oftenest she beguiles. 36

XXXI

THE KITTEN AND FALLING LEAVES

[Composed 1804.—Published 1807.]

THAT way look, my Infant, lo!
What a pretty baby-show!

See the Kitten on the wall,
Sporting with the leaves that fall,
Withered leaves—one—two—and three— 6
From the lofty elder-tree!
Through the calm and frosty air
Of this morning bright and fair,
Eddying round and round they sink
Softly, slowly: one might think, 10
From the motions that are made,
Every little leaf conveyed
Sylph or Faery hither tending,—
To this lower world descending,
Each invisible and mute, 15
In his wavering parachute.
—But the Kitten, how she starts,
Crouches, stretches, paws, and darts!
First at one, and then its fellow,
Just as light and just as yellow; 20
There are many now—now one—
Now they stop and there are none:
What intenseness of desire
In her upward eye of fire!
With a tiger-leap half-way 25
Now she meets the coming prey,
Lets it go as fast, and then
Has it in her power again:
Now she works with three or four,
Like an Indian conjurer; 30
Quick as he in feats of art,
Far beyond in joy of heart.
Were her antics played in the eye
Of a thousand standers-by,
Clapping hands with shout and stare, 35
What would little Tabby care
For the plaudits of the crowd?
Over happy to be proud,
Over wealthy in the treasure
Of her own exceeding pleasure! 40

'Tis a pretty baby-treat;
Nor, I deem, for me unmeet;
Here, for neither Babe nor me,
Other playmate can I see. 45
Of the countless living things,
That with stir of feet and wings
(In the sun or under shade,
Upon bough or grassy blade)
And with busy revellings,
Chirp and song, and murmurings, 50
Made this orchard's narrow space,
And this vale, so blithe a place;
Multitudes are swept away
Never more to breathe the day:
Some are sleeping; some in bands 55
Travelled into distant lands;
Others slunk to moor and wood,
Far from human neighbourhood;
And among the Kinds that keep
With us closer fellowship, 60
With us openly abide,
All have laid their mirth aside.

Where is he that giddy Sprite,
Blue-cap, with his colours bright,

POEMS OF THE FANCY

Who was blest as bird could be,
Feeding in the apple-tree;
Made such wanton spoil and rout,
Turning blossoms inside out;
Hung—head pointing towards the
ground—
Fluttered, perched, into a round
Bound himself, and then unbound;
Lithest, gaudiest Harlequin!
Prettiest Tumbler ever seen!
Light of heart and light of limb;
What is now become of Him?
Lambs, that through the mountains went
Frisking, bleating merriment,
When the year was in its prime,
They are sobered by this time.
If you look to vale or hill,
If you listen, all is still,
Save a little neighbouring rill,
That from out the rocky ground
Strikes a solitary sound.
Vainly glitter hill and plain,
And the air is calm in vain;
Vainly Morning spreads the lure
Of a sky serene and pure;
Creature none can she decoy
Into open sign of joy:
Is it that they have a fear
Of the dreary season near?
Or that other pleasures be
Sweeter even than gaiety?

Yet, whate'er enjoyments dwell
In the impenetrable cell
Of the silent heart which Nature
Furnishes to every creature;
Whatsoe'er we feel and know
Too sedate for outward show,
Such a light of gladness breaks,
Pretty Kitten! from thy freaks,—
Spreads with such a living grace
O'er my little Dora's face;
Yes, the sight so stirs and charms
Thee, Baby, laughing in my arms,
That almost I could repine
That your transports are not mine,
That I do not wholly fare
Even as ye do, thoughtless pair!
And I will have my careless season
Spite of melancholy reason,
Will walk through life in such a way
That, when time brings on decay,
Now and then I may possess
Hours of perfect gladness.
—Pleased by any random toy;
By a kitten's busy joy,
Or an infant's laughing eye
Sharing in the ecstasy;
I would fare like that or this,
Find my wisdom in my bliss;
Keep the sprightly soul awake,
And have faculties to take,
Even from things by sorrow wrought,
Matter for a jocund thought,

65 Spite of care, and spite of grief,
To gambol with Life's falling Leaf.

XXXII

ADDRESS TO MY INFANT DAUGHTER, DORA

ON BEING REMINDED THAT SHE WAS A
MONTH OLD THAT DAY, SEPTEMBER 16

[Composed September 16, 1804.—Published 1815.]

—HAST thou then survived—
Mild Offspring of infirm humanity,
Meek Infant! among all forlornest things
The most forlorn—one life of that bright
star,
The second glory of the Heavens?—Thou
hast;
Already hast survived that great decay,
That transformation through the wide
earth felt,
And by all nations. In that Being's sight
From whom the Race of human kind
proceed,
A thousand years are but as yesterday;
And one day's narrow circuit is to Him
Not less capacious than a thousand years.
But what is time? What outward glory?
Neither
A measure is of Thee, whose claims extend
Through 'heaven's eternal year.'—Yet
hail to Thee,
Frail, feeble, Monthling!—by that name,
methinks,
Thy scanty breathing-time is portioned
out
Not idly.—Hadst thou been of Indian
birth,
Couched on a casual bed of moss and
leaves,
And rudely canopied by leafy boughs,
Or to the churlish elements exposed
On the blank plains,—the coldness of the
night,
Or the night's darkness, or its cheerful
face
Of beauty, by the changing moon adorned,
Would, with imperious admonition, then
Have scored thine age, and punctually
timed
Thine infant history, on the minds of
those
Who might have wandered with thee.—
Mother's love,
Nor less than mother's love in other
breasts,
Will, among us warm-clad and warmly
housed,
Do for thee what the finger of the heavens
Doth all too often harshly execute
For thy unblest coevals, amid wilds
Where fancy hath small liberty to grace
The affections, to exalt them or refine;

THE WAGGONER

And the maternal sympathy itself, 36
Though strong, is, in the main, a joyless
tie

Of naked instinct, wound about the heart.
Happier, far happier is thy lot and ours!
Even now—to solemnise thy helpless
state, 40

And to enliven in the mind's regard
Thy passive beauty—parallels have risen,
Resemblances, or contrasts, that connect,
Within the region of a father's thoughts,
Thee and thy mate and sister of the sky.
And first;—thy sinless progress, through
a world 46

By sorrow darkened and by care dis-
turbed,
Apt likeness bears to hers, through
gathered clouds
Moving untouched in silver purity,
And cheering oft-times their reluctant
gloom. 50

Fair are ye both, and both are free from
stain:
But thou, how leisurely thou fill'st thy
horn

With brightness! leaving her to post
along,
And range about, disquieted in change,
And still impatient of the shape she
wears. 55

Once up, once down the hill, one journey,
Babe,
That will suffice thee; and it seems that
now

Thou hast foreknowledge that such task
is thine;
Thou travellest so contentedly, and
sleep'st 59

In such a heedless peace. Alas! full soon
Hath this conception, grateful to behold,
Changed countenance, like an object
sullied o'er

By breathing mist; and thine appears
to be

A mournful labour, while to her is given
Hope, and a renovation without end. 65
—That smile forbids the thought; for on
thy face

Smiles are beginning, like the beams of
dawn,
To shoot and circulate; smiles have there
been seen;

Tranquil assurances that Heaven sup-
ports

The feeble motions of thy life, and cheers
Thy loneliness: or shall those smiles be
called 71

Feelers of love, put forth as if to explore
This untried world, and to prepare thy
way

Through a strait passage intricate and
dim?

Such are they; and the same are tokens,
signs, 75

Which, when the appointed season hath
arrived,

Joy, as her holiest language, shall adopt;
And Reason's godlike Power be proud to
own.

XXXIII

THE WAGGONER

[Composed 1805.—Published 1819.]

'In Cairo's crowded streets
The impatient Merchant, wondering, waits in vain,
And Mecca saddens at the long delay.'

THOMSON.

TO CHARLES LAMB, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

When I sent you, a few weeks ago, the Tale of
Peter Bell, you asked 'why THE WAGGONER was
not added?'—To say the truth,—from the higher
tone of imagination, and the deeper touches of
passion aimed at in the former, I apprehended
this little Piece could not accompany it without
disadvantage. In the year 1806, if I am not mis-
taken, THE WAGGONER was read to you in manu-
script, and, as you have remembered it for so long
a time, I am the more encouraged to hope that,
since the localities on which the Poem partly de-
pends did not prevent its being interesting to you,
it may prove acceptable to others. Being there-
fore in some measure the cause of its present
appearance, you must allow me the gratification
of inscribing it to you; in acknowledgment of the
pleasure I have derived from your Writings, and
of the high esteem with which

I am very truly yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, May 20, 1819.

CANTO FIRST

'Tis spent—this burning day of June!
Soft darkness o'er its latest gleams is
stealing;
The buzzing dor-hawk, round and round,
is wheeling,—
That solitary bird
Is all that can be heard 5
In silence deeper far than that of deepest
noon!

Confiding Glow-worms, 'tis a night
Propitious to your earth-born light!
But where the scattered stars are seen
In hazy straits the clouds between, 10
Each, in his station twinkling not,
Seems changed into a pallid spot.
The mountains against heaven's grave
weight

Rise up, and grow to wondrous height.
The air, as in a lion's den, 15
Is close and hot;—and now and then
Comes a tired and sultry breeze
With a haunting and a panting,
Like the stifling of disease;
But the dews allay the heat, 20
And the silence makes it sweet.

POEMS OF THE FANCY

Hush, there is some one on the stir!
 'Tis Benjamin the Waggoner;
 Who long hath trod this toilsome way,
 Companion of the night and day,
 That far-off tinkling's drowsy cheer,
 Mixed with a faint yet grating sound
 In a moment lost and found,
 The Wain announces—by whose side
 Along the banks of Rydal Mere
 He paces on, a trusty Guide,—
 Listen! you can scarcely hear!
 Hither he his course is bending;—
 Now he leaves the lower ground,
 And up the craggy hill ascending
 Many a stop and stay he makes,
 Many a breathing-fit he takes;
 Steep the way and wearisome,
 Yet all the while his whip is dumb!

The Horses have worked with right
 good-will,
 And so have gained the top of the hill;
 He was patient, they were strong,
 And now they smoothly glide along,
 Recovering breath, and pleased to win
 The praises of mild Benjamin.
 Heavenshield him from mishap and snare!
 But why so early with this prayer?—
 Is it for threatenings in the sky?
 Or for some other danger nigh?
 No; none is near him yet, though he
 Be one of much infirmity;
 For at the bottom of the brow,
 Where once the DOVE and OLIVE-BOUGH
 Offered a greeting of good ale
 To all who entered Grasmere Vale;
 And called on him who must depart
 To leave it with a jovial heart;
 There, where the DOVE and OLIVE-BOUGH
 Once hung, a Poet harbours now,
 A simple water-drinking Bard;
 Why need our Hero then (though frail
 His best resolves) be on his guard?
 He marches by, secure and bold;
 Yet, while he thinks on times of old,
 It seems that all looks wondrous cold;
 He shrugs his shoulders, shakes his head,
 And, for the honest folk within,
 It is a doubt with Benjamin
 Whether they be alive or dead!

Here is no danger,—none at all!
 Beyond his wish he walks secure;
 But pass a mile—and then for trial,—
 Then for the pride of self-denial;
 If he resist that tempting door,
 Which with such friendly voice will call;
 If he resist those casement panes,
 And that bright gleam which thence will fall
 Upon his Leaders' bells and manes,
 Inviting him with cheerful lure:
 For still, though all be dark elsewhere,
 Some shining notice will be there,
 Of open house and ready fare.

The place to Benjamin right well
 Is known, and by as strong a spell
 As used to be that sign of love
 And hope—the OLIVE-BOUGH and DOVE;
 He knows it to his cost, good Man!
 Who does not know the famous SWAN?
 Object uncouth! and yet our boast,
 For it was painted by the Host;
 His own conceit the figure planned,
 'Twas coloured all by his own hand;
 And that frail Child of thirsty clay,
 Of whom I sing this rustic lay,
 Could tell with self-dissatisfaction
 Quaint stories of the bird's attraction!

Well! that is past—and in despite
 Of open door and shining light.
 And now the conqueror essays
 The long ascent of Dunmail-raise;
 And with his team is gentle here
 As when he clomb from Rydal Mere;
 His whip they do not dread—his voice
 They only hear it to rejoice.
 To stand or go is at their pleasure;
 Their efforts and their time they measure
 By generous pride within the breast;
 And while they strain, and while they
 rest,
 He thus pursues his thoughts at leisure.

Now am I fairly safe to-night—
 And with proud cause my heart is light:
 I trespassed lately worse than ever—
 But Heaven has blest a good endeavour;
 And, to my soul's content, I find
 The evil One is left behind.
 Yes, let my master fume and fret,
 Here am I—with my horses yet!
 My jolly team, he finds that ye
 Will work for nobody but me!
 Full proof of this the Country gained;
 It knows how ye were vexed and strained,
 And forced unworthy stripes to bear,
 When trusted to another's care.
 Here was it—on this rugged slope,
 Which now ye climb with heart and hope,
 I saw you, between rage and fear,
 Plunge, and fling back a spiteful ear,
 And ever more and more confused,
 As ye were more and more abused:
 As chance would have it, passing by
 I saw you in that jeopardy:
 A word from me was like a charm;
 Ye pulled together with one mind;
 And your huge burthen, safe from harm,
 Moved like a vessel in the wind!
 —Yes, without me, up hills so high
 'Tis vain to strive for mastery.
 Then grieve not, jolly team! though tough
 The road we travel, steep, and rough;

¹ This rude piece of self-taught art (such is the progress of refinement) has been supplanted by a professional production.

THE WAGGONER

Though Rydal-heights and Dunmail-
raise, 140
And all their fellow banks and braes,
Full often make you stretch and strain,
And halt for breath and halt again,
Yet to their sturdiness 'tis owing
That side by side we still are going! 145

While Benjamin in earnest mood
His meditations thus pursued,
A storm, which had been smothered long,
Was growing inwardly more strong;
And, in its struggles to get free, 150
Was busily employed as he.
The thunder had begun to growl—
He heard not, too intent of soul;
The air was now without a breath— 154
He marked not that 'twas still as death.
But soon large rain-drops on his head
Fell with the weight of drops of lead;—
He starts—and takes, at the admonition,
A sage survey of his condition.
The road is black before his eyes, 160
Glimmering faintly where it lies;
Black is the sky—and every hill,
Up to the sky, is blacker still—
Sky, hill, and dale, one dismal room,
Hung round and overhung with gloom;
Save that above a single height 166
Is to be seen a lurid light,
Above Helm-crag—a streak half dead,
A burning of portentous red;
And near that lurid light, full well 170
The ASTROLOGER, sage Sidrophel,
Where at his desk and book he sits,
Puzzling aloft his curious wits;
He whose domain is held in common
With no one but the ANCIENT WOMAN, 175
Covering beside her rifted cell,
As if intent on magic spell;—
Dread pair that, spite of wind and
weather,
Still sit upon Helm-crag together!

The ASTROLOGER was not unseen 180
By solitary Benjamin;
But total darkness came anon,
And he and every thing was gone:
And suddenly a ruffling breeze,
(That would have rocked the sounding
trees, 185
Had aught of sylvan growth been there),
Swept through the Hollow long and bare:
The rain rushed down—the road was
battered,
As with the force of billows shattered;
The horses are dismayed, nor know 190
Whether they should stand or go;
And Benjamin is groping near them,
Sees nothing, and can scarcely hear them.

¹ A mountain of Grasmere, the broken summit of which presents two figures, full as distinctly shaped as that of the famous Cobbler near Arroquhar in Scotland.

He is astounded,—wonder not,—
With such a charge in such a spot; 195
Astounded in the mountain gap
With thunder-peals, clap after clap,
Close-treading on the silent flashes—
And somewhere, as he thinks, by crashes
Among the rocks; with weight of rain,
And sullen motions long and slow, 201
That to a dreary distance go—
Till, breaking in upon the dying strain,
A rending o'er his head begins the fray
again.

Meanwhile, uncertain what to do, 205
And oftentimes compelled to halt,
The horses cautiously pursue
Their way, without mishap or fault;
And now have reached that pile of stones,
Heaped over brave King Dunmail's
bones, 210
He who had once supreme command,
Last king of rocky Cumberland;
His bones, and those of all his Power,
Slain here in a disastrous hour!

When, passing through this narrow
strait, 215
Stony, and dark, and desolate,
Benjamin can faintly hear
A voice that comes from some one near,
A female voice:—'Whoe'er you be,
Stop,' it exclaimed, 'and pity me!' 220
And less in pity than in wonder,
Amid the darkness and the thunder,
The Waggoner, with prompt command,
Summons his horses to a stand.

While, with increasing agitation, 225
The Woman urged her supplication,
In rueful words, with sobs between—
The voice of tears that fell unseen;
There came a flash—a startling glare,
And all Seat-Sandal was laid bare! 230
'Tis not a time for nice suggestion,
And Benjamin, without a question,
Taking her for some way-worn rover,
Said, 'Mount, and get you under cover!'

Another voice, in tone as hoarse 235
As a swollen brook with rugged course,
Cried out, 'Good brother, why so fast?
I've had a glimpse of you—*avast!*
Or, since it suits you to be civil,
Take her at once—for good and evil!'

'It is my Husband,' softly said 241
The Woman, as if half afraid:
By this time she was snug within,
Through help of honest Benjamin; 244
She and her Babe, which to her breast
With thankfulness the Mother pressed;
And now the same strong voice more near
Said cordially, 'My Friend, what cheer?'

POEMS OF THE FANCY

Rough doings these! as God's my judge,
The sky owes somebody a grudge! 250
We've had in half an hour or less
A twelvemonth's terror and distress!'

Then Benjamin entreats the Man
Would mount, too, quickly as he can:
The Sailor—Sailor now no more, 255
But such he had been heretofore—
To courteous Benjamin replied,
'Go you your way, and mind not me;
For I must have, whate'er betide,
My Ass and fifty things beside,— 260
Go, and I'll follow speedily!'

The Waggon moves—and with its load
Descends along the sloping road;
And the rough Sailor instantly
Turns to a little tent hard by: 265
For when, at closing-in of day,
The family had come that way,
Green pasture and the soft warm air
Tempted them to settle there.—
Green is the grass for beast to graze, 270
Around the stones of Dunmail-raise!

The Sailor gathers up his bed,
Takes down the canvas overhead;
And after farewell to the place,
A parting word—though not of grace,
Pursues, with Ass and all his store, 276
The way the Waggon went before.

CANTO SECOND

If Wytheburne's modest House of prayer,
As lowly as the lowliest dwelling,
Had, with its belfry's humble stock,
A little pair that hang in air,
Been mistress also of a clock, 5
(And one, too, not in crazy plight),
Twelve strokes that clock would have
been telling
Under the brow of old Helvellyn—
Its bead-roll of midnight,
Then, when the Hero of my tale 10
Was passing by, and, down the vale
(The vale now silent, hushed, I ween,
As if a storm had never been)
Proceeding with a mind at ease;
While the old Familiar of the seas, 15
Intent to use his utmost haste,
Gained ground upon the Waggon fast,
And gives another lusty cheer;
For, spite of rumbling of the wheels,
A welcome greeting he can hear;— 20
It is a fiddle in its glee
Dinning from the CHERRY TREE!

Thence the sound—the light is there—
As Benjamin is now aware,
Who, to his inward thoughts confined, 25
Had almost reached the festive door,
When, startled by the Sailor's roar,

He hears a sound and sees the light,
And in a moment calls to mind
That 'tis the village MERRY-NIGHT! 30

Although before in no dejection,
At this insidious recollection
His heart with sudden joy is filled,—
His ears are by the music thrilled,
His eyes take pleasure in the road 35
Glittering before him bright and broad;
And Benjamin is wet and cold,
And there are reasons manifold
That make the good, tow'rds which he's
yearning,
Look fairly like a lawful earning. 40

Nor has thought time to come and go,
To vibrate between yes and no;
For, cries the Sailor, 'Glorious chance
That blew us hither!—let him dance,
Who can or will!—my honest soul, 45
Our treat shall be a friendly bowl!'
He draws him to the door—'Come in,
Come, come,' cries he to Benjamin!
And Benjamin—ah, woe is me!
Gave the word—the horses heard 50
And halted, though reluctantly.

'Blithe souls and lightsome hearts have
we
Feasting at the CHERRY TREE!'
This was the outside proclamation,
This was the inside salutation; 55
What bustling—jostling—high and low!
A universal overflow!
What tankards foaming from the tap!
What store of cakes in every lap!
What thumping—stumping—overhead!
The thunder had not been more busy:
With such a stir you would have said, 62
This little place may well be dizzy!
'Tis who can dance with greatest vigour—
'Tis what can be most prompt and eager; 66
As if it heard the fiddle's call,
The pewter clatters on the wall;
The very bacon shows its feeling,
Swinging from the smoky ceiling!

A steaming bowl, a blazing fire, 70
What greater good can heart desire?
'Twere worth a wise man's while to try
The utmost anger of the sky:
To seek for thoughts of a gloomy cast,
If such the bright amends at last. 75
Now should you say I judge amiss,
The CHERRY TREE shows proof of this;
For soon, of all the happy there,
Our Travellers are the happiest pair;
All care with Benjamin is gone— 80
A Cæsar past the Rubicon!

¹ A term well known in the North of England, and applied to rural Festivals where young persons meet in the evening for the purpose of dancing.

THE WAGGONER

He thinks not of his long, long, strife;—
The Sailor, Man by nature gay,
Hath no resolves to throw away;
And he hath now forgot his Wife,
Hath quite forgotten her—or may be
Thinks her the luckiest soul on earth,
Within that warm and peaceful berth,
Under cover,
Terror over,
Sleeping by her sleeping Baby.

With bowl that sped from hand to
hand,
The gladdest of the gladsome band,
Amid their own delight and fun,
They hear—when every dance is done,
When every whirling bout is o'er—
The fiddle's *squeak*¹—that call to bliss,
Ever followed by a kiss;
They envy not the happy lot,
But enjoy their own the more!

While thus our jocund Travellers fare,
Up springs the Sailor from his chair—
Limps (for I might have told before
That he was lame) across the floor—
Is gone—returns—and with a prize;
With what?—a Ship of lusty size;
A gallant stately Man-of-war,
Fixed on a smoothly-sliding car.
Surprise to all, but most surprise
To Benjamin, who rubs his eyes,
Not knowing that he had befriended
A Man so gloriously attended!

'This,' cries the Sailor, 'a Third-rate
is—
Stand back, and you shall see her gratis!
This was the Flag-ship at the Nile,
The VANGUARD—you may smirk and
smile,
But, pretty Maid, if you look near,
You'll find you've much in little here!
A nobler ship did never swim,
And you shall see her in full trim:
I'll set, my friends, to do you honour,
Set every inch of sail upon her.'
So said, so done; and masts, sails, yards,
He names them all; and interlards
His speech with uncouth terms of art,
Accomplished in the showman's part;
And then, as from a sudden check,
Cries out—'Tis there, the quarter-deck
On which brave Admiral Nelson stood—
A sight that would have roused your
blood!
One eye he had, which, bright as ten,
Burned like a fire among his men;
Let this be land, and that be sea,
Here lay the French—and *thus* came we!'

Hushed was by this the fiddle's sound,
The dancers all were gathered round,

¹ At the close of each strathspey, or fig., a particular note from the fiddle summons the Rustic to the agreeable duty of saluting his partner.

And such the stillness of the house,
You might have heard a nibbling mouse;
While, borrowing helps where'er he may,
The Sailor through the story runs
Of ships to ships and guns to guns;
And does his utmost to display
The dismal conflict, and the might
And terror of that marvellous night!
'A bowl, a bowl of double measure,'
Cries Benjamin, 'a draught of length!
To Nelson, England's pride and treasure,
Her bulwark and her tower of strength!
When Benjamin had seized the bowl,
The mastiff, from beneath the waggon,
Where he lay, watchful as a dragon,
Rattled his chain;—'twas all in vain,
For Benjamin, triumphant soul!
He heard the monitory growl;
Heard—and in opposition quaffed
A deep, determined, desperate draught!
Nor did the battered Tar forget,
Or flinch from what he deemed his debt:
Then, like a hero crowned with laurel,
Back to her place the ship he led;
Wheeled her back in full apparel;
And so, flag flying at mast head,
Re-yoked her to the Ass:—anon
Cries Benjamin, 'We must be gone.'
Thus, after two hours' hearty stay,
Again behold them on their way!

CANTO THIRD

RIGHT gladly had the horses stirred,
When they the wished-for greeting heard,
The whip's loud notice from the door,
That they were free to move once more.
You think, those doings must have bred
In them disheartening doubts and dread;
No, not a horse of all the eight,
Although it be a moonless night,
Fears either for himself or freight;
For this they know (and let it hide,
In part, the offences of their guide)
That Benjamin, with clouded brains,
Is worth the best with all their pains;
And, if they had a prayer to make,
The prayer would be that they may take
With him whatever comes in course,
The better fortune or the worse;
That no one else may have business near
them,
And, drunk or sober, he may steer them.

So forth in dauntless mood they fare,
And with them goes the guardian pair.

Now, heroes, for the true commotion,
The triumph of your late devotion!
Can aught on earth impede delight,
Still mounting to a higher height;
And higher still—a greedy flight!
Can any low-born care pursue her,
Can any mortal clog come to her?

POEMS OF THE FANCY

No notion have they—not a thought,
That is from joyless regions brought! 30
And, while they coast the silent lake,
Their inspiration I partake;
Share their empyreal spirits—yea,
With their enraptured vision see—
O fancy—what a jubilee! 35
What shifting pictures—clad in gleams
Of colour bright as feverish dreams!
Earth, spangled sky, and lake serene,
Involved and restless all—a scene
Pregnant with mutual exaltation, 40
Rich change, and multiplied creation!
This sight to me the Muse imparts;—
And then, what kindness in their hearts!
What tears of rapture, what vow-making,
Profound entreaties, and hand-shaking!
What solemn, vacant, interlacing, 46
As if they'd fall asleep embracing!
Then, in the turbulence of glee,
And in the excess of amity,
Says Benjamin, 'That Ass of thine, 50
He spoils thy sport, and hinders mine:
If he were tethered to the waggon,
He'd drag as well what he is dragging;
And we, as brother should with brother,
Might trudge it alongside each other!' 55

Forthwith, obedient to command,
The horses made a quiet stand;
And to the waggon's skirts was tied
The Creature, by the Mastiff's side,
The Mastiff wondering, and perplexed 60
With dread of what will happen next;
And thinking it but sorry cheer
To have such company so near!

This new arrangement made, the Wain
Through the still night proceeds again;
No moon hath risen her light to lend; 66
But indistinctly may be kenne'd
The VANGUARD, following close behind,
Sails spread, as if to catch the wind!

'Thy wife and child are snug and warm, 70
Thy ship will travel without harm;
I like,' said Benjamin, 'her shape and stature:

And this of mine—this bulky creature
Of which I have the steering—this,
Seen fairly, is not much amiss! 75
We want your streamers, friend, you know;

But, altogether as we go,
We make a kind of handsome show!
Among these hills, from first to last,
We've weathered many a furious blast;
Hard passage forcing on, with head 81
Against the storm, and canvas spread.
I hate a boaster; but to thee
I will say't, who know'st both land and sea,

The unluckiest hulk that stems the brine
Is hardly worse beset than mine, 86

When cross-winds on her quarter beat;
And, fairly lifted from my feet,
I stagger onward—heaven knows how;
But not so pleasantly as now: 90
Poor pilot I, by snows confounded,
And many a foundrous pit surrounded!
Yet here we are, by night and day
Grinding through rough and smooth our way; 94
Through foul and fair our task fulfilling;
And long shall be so yet—God willing!

'Ay,' said the Tar, 'through fair and foul—
But save us from yon screeching owl!' 96
That instant was begun a fray
Which called their thoughts another way:
The Mastiff, ill-conditioned car! 101
What must he do but growl and snarl,
Still more and more dissatisfied
With the meek comrade at his side!
Till, not incensed though put to proof, 106
The Ass, uplifting a hind hoof,
Salutes the Mastiff on the head;
And so were better manners bred,
And all was calmed and quieted.

'Yon screech-owl,' says the Sailor, turning 110
Back to his former cause of mourning,
'Yon owl!—pray God that all be well!
'Tis worse than any funeral bell;
As sure as I've the gift of sight,
We shall be meeting ghosts to-night!' 115
—Said Benjamin, 'This whip shall lay
A thousand, if they cross our way.
I know that Wanton's noisy station,
I know him and his occupation;
The jolly bird hath learned his cheer 120
Upon the banks of Windermere;
Where a tribe of them make merry,
Mocking the Man that keeps the ferry;
Hallooing from an open throat,
Like travellers shouting for a boat. 125
—The tricks he learned at Windermere
This vagrant owl is playing here—
That is the worst of his employment:
He's at the top of his enjoyment!'

This explanation stilled the alarm, 130
Cured the foreboder like a charm;
This, and the manner, and the voice,
Summoned the Sailor to rejoice;
His heart is up—he fears no evil
From life or death, from man or devil;
He wheels—and, making many stops, 136
Brandished his crutch against the mountain tops;
And, while he talked of blows and scars,
Benjamin, among the stars,
Beheld a dancing—and a glancing; 140
Such retreating and advancing
As, I ween, was never seen
In bloodiest battle since the days of Mars!

CANTO FOURTH

THUS they, with freaks of proud delight,
 Beguile the remnant of the night;
 And many a snatch of jovial song
 Regales them as they wind along;
 While to the music, from on high,
 The echoes make a glad reply.—
 But the sage Muse the revel needs
 No farther than her story needs;
 Nor will she servilely attend
 The loitering journey to its end.
 —Blithe spirits of her own impel
 The Muse, who scents the morning air,
 To take of this transported pair
 A brief and unreprieved farewell;
 To quit the slow-paced waggon's side, 15
 And wander down yon hawthorn dell,
 With murmuring Greta for her guide.
 —There doth she ken the awful form
 Of Raven-crag—black as a storm— 19
 Glimmering through the twilight pale;
 And Ghimmer-crag,¹ his tall twin brother,
 Each peering forth to meet the other:—
 And, while she roves through St. John's
 Vale,

Along the smooth unpathwayed plain,
 By sheep-track or through cottage lane,
 Where no disturbance comes to intrude
 Upon the pensive solitude, 27
 Her unsuspecting eye, perchance,
 With the rude shepherd's favoured glance,
 Beholds the faeries in array, 30
 Whose party-coloured garments gay
 The silent company betray:
 Red, green, and blue; a moment's sight!
 For Skiddaw-top with rosy light
 Is touched—and all the band take flight.
 —Fly also, Muse! and from the dell 36
 Mount to the ridge of Nathdale Fell;
 Thence look thou forth o'er wood and
 lawn
 Hoar with the frost-like dews of dawn;
 Across yon meadowy bottom look, 40
 Where close fogs hide their parent brook;
 And see, beyond that hamlet small
 The ruined towers of Threlkeld-hall,
 Lurking in a double shade,
 By trees and lingering twilight made! 45
 There, at Blencathara's rugged feet,
 Sir Lancelot gave a safe retreat
 To noble Clifford; from annoy
 Concealed the persecuted boy,
 Well pleased in rustic garb to feed 50
 His flock, and pipe on shepherd's reed
 Among this multitude of hills,
 Crag, woodlands, waterfalls, and rills;
 Which soon the morning shall enfold,
 From east to west, in ample vest 55
 Of massy gloom and radiance bold.

The mists, that o'er the streamlet's bed
 Hung low, begin to rise and spread;

¹ The crag of the ewe lamb.

Even while I speak, their skirts of grey
 Are smitten by a silver ray; 60
 And, lo!—up Castrigg's naked steep
 (Where, smoothly urged, the vapours
 sweep
 5 Along—and scatter and divide,
 Like fleecy clouds self-multiplied)
 The stately waggon is ascending, 65
 With faithful Benjamin attending,
 Apparent now beside his team—
 Now lost amid a glittering steam:
 And with him goes his Sailor-friend,
 By this time near their journey's end; 70
 And, after their high-minded riot,
 Sickening into thoughtful quiet;
 As if the morning's pleasant hour
 Had for their joys a killing power.
 And sooth for Benjamin a vein 75
 Is opened of still deeper pain,
 As if his heart by notes were stung
 From out the lowly hedge-rows flung;
 As if the warbler lost in light
 Reproved his soarings of the night, 80
 In strains of rapture pure and holy
 Unbraided his distempered folly.

Drooping is he, his step is dull;
 But the horses stretch and pull;
 With increasing vigour climb, 85
 Eager to repair lost time;
 Whether, by their own desert,
 Knowing what cause there is for shame,
 They are labouring to avert
 As much as may be of the blame, 90
 Which, they foresee, must soon alight
 Upon his head, whom, in despite
 Of all his failings, they love best;
 Whether for him they are distrest;
 Or, by length of fasting roused, 95
 Are impatient to be housed:
 Up against the hill they strain
 Tugging at the iron chain,
 Tugging all with might and main,
 Last and foremost, every horse 100
 To the utmost of his force!
 And the smoke and respiration,
 Rising like an exhalation,
 Blend with the mist—a moving shroud
 To form, an undissolving cloud; 105
 Which, with slant ray, the merry sun
 Takes delight to play upon.
 Never golden-haired Apollo,
 Pleased some favourite chief to follow
 Through accidents of peace or war, 110
 In a perilous moment threw
 Around the object of his care
 Veil of such celestial hue;
 Interposed so bright a screen—
 Him and his enemies between! 115

Alas! what boots it?—who can hide,
 When the malicious Fates are bent
 On working out an ill intent?
 Can destiny be turned aside?

POEMS OF THE FANCY

No—sad progress of my story!
 Benjamin, this outward glory
 Cannot shield thee from thy Master,
 Who from Keswick has pricked forth,
 Sour and surly as the north;
 And, in fear of some disaster,
 Comes to give what help he may,
 And to hear what thou canst say;
 If, as needs he must forbode,
 Thou hast been loitering on the road!
 His fears, his doubts, may now take flight—
 The wished-for object is in sight;
 Yet, trust the Muse, it rather hath
 Stirred him up to livelier wrath;
 Which he stifles, moody man!
 With all the patience that he can;
 To the end that, at your meeting,
 He may give thee decent greeting.

There he is—resolved to stop,
 Till the waggon gains the top;
 But stop he cannot—must advance:
 Him Benjamin, with lucky glance,
 Espies—and instantly is ready,
 Self-collected, poised, and steady:
 And, to be the better seen,
 Issues from his radiant shroud,
 From his close-attending cloud,
 With careless air and open mien.
 Erect his port, and firm his going;
 So struts yon cock that now is crowing;
 And the morning light in grace
 Strikes upon his lifted face,
 Hurrying the pallid hue away
 That might his trespasses betray.
 But what can all avail to clear him,
 Or what need of explanation,
 Parley or interrogation?
 For the Master sees, alas!
 That unhappy Figure near him,
 Limping o'er the dewy grass,
 Where the road it fringes, sweet,
 Soft and cool to way-worn feet;
 And, O indignity! an Ass,
 By his noble Mastiff's side,
 Tethered to the waggon's tail:
 And the ship, in all her pride,
 Following after in full sail!
 Not to speak of babe and mother;
 Who, contented with each other,
 And snug as birds in leafy arbour,
 Find, within, a blessed harbour!

With eager eyes the Master pries;
 Looks in and out, and through and
 through;
 Says nothing—till at last he spies
 A wound upon the Mastiff's head,
 A wound where plainly might be read
 What feats an Ass's hoof can do!
 But drop the rest:—this aggravation,
 This complicated provocation,
 A hoard of grievances unsealed;
 All past forgiveness it repealed;

120 And thus, and through distempered blood
 On both sides, Benjamin the good,
 The patient, and the tender-hearted,
 Was from his team and waggon parted;
 When duty of that day was o'er, 185
 Laid down his whip—and served no
 more.—
 Nor could the waggon long survive,
 Which Benjamin had ceased to drive:
 It lingered on;—guide after guide
 Ambitiously the office tried; 190
 But each unmanageable hill
 Called for *his* patience and *his* skill;—
 And sure it is that through this night,
 And what the morning brought to light,
 135 Two losses had we to sustain, 195
 We lost both WAGGONER and WAIN!

Accept, O Friend, for praise or blame,
 The gift of this adventurous song;
 A record which I dared to frame, 199
 Though timid scruples checked me long;
 They checked me—and I left the theme
 Untouched;—in spite of many a gleam
 145 Of fancy which thereon was shed,
 Like pleasant sunbeams shifting still
 Upon the side of a distant hill: 205
 But Nature might not be gainsaid;
 For what I have and what I miss
 I sing of these;—it makes my bliss!
 Nor is it I who play the part,
 But a shy spirit in my heart, 210
 That comes and goes—will sometimes leap
 155 From hiding-places ten years deep;
 Or haunts me with familiar face,
 Returning, like a ghost unlaid,
 Until the debt I owe be paid. 215
 Forgive me then; for I had been
 160 On friendly terms with this Machine:
 In him, while he was wont to trace
 Our roads, through many a long year's
 space,
 A living almanack had we; 220
 165 We had a speaking diary,
 That in this uneventful place,
 Gave to the days a mark and name
 By which we knew them when they came.
 —Yes, I, and all about me here, 225
 170 Through all the changes of the year,
 Had seen him through the mountains go,
 In pomp of mist or pomp of snow,
 Majestically huge and slow:
 Or with a milder grace adorning 230
 The landscape of a summer's morning;
 174 While Grasmere smoothed her liquid
 plain
 The moving image to detain;
 And mighty Fairfield, with a chime
 Of echoes, to his march kept time; 235
 When little other business stirred,
 180 And little other sound was heard;

THE WAGGONER

In that delicious hour of balm,
Stillness, solitude, and calm,
While yet the valley is arrayed, 240
On this side with a sober shade;
On that is prodigally bright—
Crag, lawn, and wood—with rosy light.
—But most of all, thou lordly Wain!
I wish to have thee here again, 245
When windows flap and chimney roars,
And all is dismal out of doors;
And, sitting by my fire, I see
Eight sorry carts, no less a train!
Unworthy successors of thee, 250
Come straggling through the wind and rain:
And oft, as they pass slowly on,
Beneath my windows, one by one,

See, perched upon the naked height
The summit of a cumbrous freight, 255
A single traveller—and there
Another; then perhaps a pair—
The lame, the sickly, and the old;
Men, women, heartless with the cold;
And babes in wet and starveling plight;
Which once, be weather as it might, 261
Had still a nest within a nest,
Thy shelter—and their mother's breast!
Then most of all, then far the most,
Do I regret what we have lost; 265
Am grieved for that unhappy sin
Which robbed us of good Benjamin;—
And of his stately Charge, which none
Could keep alive when He was gone!

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

I

THERE WAS A BOY

[Composed November or December, 1798.
Published 1800.]

THERE was a Boy; ye knew him well, ye
cliffs
And islands of Winander!—many a time,
At evening, when the earliest stars began
To move along the edges of the hills,
Rising or setting, would he stand alone, 5
Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering
lake;
And there, with fingers interwoven, both
hands
Pressed closely palm to palm and to his
mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls, 10
That they might answer him.—And they
would shout
Across the watery vale, and shout again,
Responsive to his call,—with quivering
feet,
And long halloos, and screams, and echoes
loud
Redoubled and redoubled; concourse
wild 15
Of jocund din! And, when there came a
pause
Of silence such as baffled his best skill:
Then sometimes, in that silence, while he
hung
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise
Has carried far into his heart the voice 20
Of mountain-torrents; or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,

Its woods, and that uncertain heaven
received
Into the bosom of the steady lake. 25

This boy was taken from his mates, and
died
In childhood, ere he was full twelve years
old.
Pre-eminent in beauty is the vale
Where he was born and bred: the church-
yard hangs
Upon a slope above the village-school;
And through that churchyard when my
way has led 31
On summer-evenings, I believe that there
A long half-hour together I have stood
Mute—looking at the grave in which he
lies!

II

TO THE CUCKOO

[Composed March 23–26, 1802.—Published 1807.]

O BLITHE New-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass 5
Thy twofold shout I hear;
From hill to hill it seems to pass
At once far off, and near.

Though babbling only to the Vale,
Of sunshine and of flowers, 10
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing, 15
A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my schoolboy days
I listened to; that Cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky. 20

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet; 25
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessed Bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be 30
An unsubstantial, faery place;
That is fit home for Thee!

III

A NIGHT-PIECE

[Composed January 25, 1798.—Published 1815.]

—The sky is overcast
With a continuous cloud of texture close,
Heavy and wan, all whitened by the
Moon,

Which through that veil is indistinctly
seen, 4

A dull, contracted circle, yielding light
So feebly spread that not a shadow falls,
Chequering the ground—from rock,
plant, tree, or tower.

At length a pleasant instantaneous gleam
Startles the pensive traveller while he
treads

His lonesome path, with unobserving eye
Bent earthwards; he looks up—the clouds
are split 11

Asunder,—and above his head he sees
The clear Moon, and the glory of the
heavens.

There in a black-blue vault she sails along,
Followed by multitudes of stars, that,
small 15

And sharp, and bright, along the dark
abyss

Drive as she drives: how fast they wheel
away,

Yet vanish not!—the wind is in the tree,
But they are silent;—still they roll along
Immeasurably distant; and the vault,
Built round by those white clouds, enor-
mous clouds, 21

Still deepens its unfathomable depth.
At length the Vision closes; and the mind,
Not undisturbed by the delight it feels,
Which slowly settles into peaceful calm,
Is left to muse upon the solemn scene. 26

IV

AIREY-FORCE VALLEY

[Composed (?).—Published 1842]

—Not a breath of air
Ruffles the bosom of this leafy glen.
From the brook's margin, wide around,
the trees

Are steadfast as the rocks; the brook
itself,

Old as the hills that feed it from afar, 5
Doth rather deepen than disturb the calm
Where all things else are still and motion-
less.

And yet, even now, a little breeze, per-
chance

Escaped from boisterous winds that rage
without,

Has entered, by the sturdy oaks unfelt, 11
But to its gentle touch how sensitive
Is the light ash! that, pendent from the
brow

Of yon dim cave, in seeming silence makes
A soft eye-music of slow-waving boughs,
Powerful almost as vocal harmony 15
To stay the wanderer's steps and soothe
his thoughts.

V

YEW-TREES

[Composed 1803.—Published 1815.]

THERE is a Yew-tree, pride of Lorton Vale,
Which to this day stands single, in the
midst

Of its own darkness, as it stood of yore:
Not loth to furnish weapons for the bands
Of Umfraville or Percy ere they marched
To Scotland's heaths; or those that
crossed the sea 6

And drew their sounding bows at Azin-
cour,

Perhaps at earlier Crecy, or Poitiers.
Of vast circumference and gloom pro-
found

This solitary Tree! a living thing 10
Produced too slowly ever to decay;

Of form and aspect too magnificent
To be destroyed. But worthier still of note
Are those fraternal Four of Borrowdale,
Joined in one solemn and capacious grove;

Huge trunks! and each particular trunk
a growth 16

Of intertwined fibres serpentine
Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved;

Nor uninformed with Phantasy, and looks
That threaten the profane; a pillared
shade, 20

Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown
hue,

By sheddings from the pining umbrage
tinged

Perennially—beneath whose sable roof
 Of boughs, as if for festal purpose decked
 With unrejoicing berries—ghostly Shapes
 May meet at noontide; Fear and trem-
 bling Hope, 26
 Silence and Foresight; Death the Skeleton
 And Time the Shadow;—there to cele-
 brate,
 As in a natural temple scattered o'er
 With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,
 United worship; or in mute repose 31
 To lie, and listen to the mountain flood
 Murmuring from Glaramara's inmost
 caves.

VI

NUTTING

[Composed 1798-9.—Published 1800.]

—It seems a day
 (I speak of one from many singled out)
 One of those heavenly days that cannot
 die;
 When, in the eagerness of boyish hope,
 I left our cottage-threshold, sallying forth
 With a huge wallet o'er my shoulders
 slung, 6
 A nutting-crook in hand; and turned my
 steps
 Tow'rd some far-distant wood, a Figure
 quaint,
 Tricked out in proud disguise of cast-off
 weeds
 Which for that service had been hus-
 banded, 10
 By exhortation of my frugal Dame—
 Motley accoutrement, of power to smile
 At thorns, and brakes, and brambles,—
 and in truth
 More ragged than need was! O'er path-
 less rocks,
 Through beds of matted fern, and tangled
 thickets, 15
 Forcing my way, I came to one dear nook
 Unvisited, where not a broken bough
 Drooped with its withered leaves, un-
 gracious sign
 Of devastation; but the hazels rose
 Tall and erect, with tempting clusters
 hung, 20
 A virgin scene!—A little while I stood,
 Breathing with such suppression of the
 heart
 As joy delights in; and with wise restraint
 Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed
 The banquet;—or beneath the trees I sate
 Among the flowers, and with the flowers
 I played; 26
 A temper known to those who, after long
 And weary expectation, have been blest
 With sudden happiness beyond all hope.
 Perhaps it was a bower beneath whose
 leaves 30

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

The violets of five seasons re-appear
 And fade, unseen by any human eye;
 Where fairy water-breaks do murmur on
 For ever; and I saw the sparkling foam,
 And—with my cheek on one of those
 green stones 35
 That, fleeced with moss, under the shady
 trees,
 Lay round me, scattered like a flock of
 sheep—
 I heard the murmur and the murmuring
 sound,
 In that sweet mood when pleasure loves
 to pay
 Tribute to ease; and, of its joy secure, 40
 The heart luxuriates with indifferent
 things,
 Wasting its kindness on stocks and
 stones,
 And on the vacant air. Then up I rose,
 And dragged to earth both branch and
 bough, with crash 44
 And merciless ravage; and the shady nook
 Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,
 Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up
 Their quiet being; and unless I now
 Confound my present feelings with the
 past,
 Ere from the mutilated bower I turned 50
 Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings,
 I felt a sense of pain when I beheld
 The silent trees, and saw the intruding
 sky.—
 Then, dearest Maiden, move along these
 shades 54
 In gentleness of heart; with gentle hand
 Touch—for there is a spirit in the woods.

VII

THE SIMPLON PASS

[Composed 1799? (certainly not later than 1803).
 Published 1845.]

—BROOK and road
 Were fellow-travellers in this gloomy
 Pass,
 And with them did we journey several
 hours
 At a slow step. The immeasurable height
 Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
 The stationary blasts of waterfalls, 6
 And in the narrow rent, at every turn,
 Winds thwarting winds bewildered and
 forlorn,
 The torrents shooting from the clear blue
 sky,
 The rocks that muttered close upon our
 ears, 10
 Black drizzling crags that spake by the
 wayside
 As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
 And giddy prospect of the raving stream,

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

The unfettered clouds and region of the
heavens,
Tumult and peace, the darkness and the
light— 15
Were all like workings of one mind, the
features
Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree,
Characters of the great Apocalypse,
The types and symbols of Eternity,
Of first, and last, and midst, and without
end. 20

VIII

[Composed 1804.—Published 1807.]

SHE was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair; 5
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn;
A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and way-lay. 10

I saw her upon nearer view,
A Spirit, yet a Woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin-liberty;
A countenance in which did meet 15
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A Creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and 20
smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
A Traveller between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will, 25
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light. 30

IX

[Composed 1806.—Published 1807.]

O NIGHTINGALE! thou surely art
A creature of a 'fiery heart':—
These notes of thine—they pierce and 5
pierce;
Tumultuous harmony and fierce!
Thou sing'st as if the God of wine
Had helped thee to a Valentine;
A song in mockery and despite
Of shades, and dews, and silent night;
And steady bliss, and all the loves 10
Now sleeping in these peaceful groves.

X

[Composed 1799.—Published 1800.]

THREE years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, 'A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown;
This Child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make 5
A Lady of my own.

'Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse: and with me
The Girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power 11
To kindle or restrain.

'She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs; 15
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

'The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend; 20
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the Storm
Grace that shall mould the Maiden's
form
By silent sympathy.

'The stars of midnight shall be dear 25
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward
round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face. 30

'And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live 35
Here in this happy dell.'

Thus Nature spake—The work was
done—
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm, and quiet scene; 40
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

XI

[Composed 1799.—Published 1800.]

A SLUMBER did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears:
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force; 5
She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

XII

[Composed 1804.—Published 1807.]

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees, 5
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay: 10
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay, 15
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood, 20
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

XIII

THE REVERIE OF POOR SUSAN

[Composed 1797.—Published 1800.]

AT the corner of Wood Street, when day-
light appears,
Hangs a Thrush that sings loud, it has
sung for three years:
Poor Susan has passed by the spot, and
has heard
In the silence of morning the song of the
Bird.

'Tis a note of enchantment; what ails her?
She sees 5
A mountain ascending, a vision of trees;

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

Bright volumes of vapour through Loth-
bury glide,
And a river flows on through the vale of
Cheapside.

Green pastures she views in the midst of
the dale,
Down which she so often has tripped with
her pail; 10
And a single small cottage, a nest like a
dove's,
The one only dwelling on earth that she
loves.

She looks, and her heart is in heaven:
but they fade,
The mist and the river, the hill and the
shade:
The stream will not flow, and the hill will
not rise, 15
And the colours have all passed away
from her eyes!

XIV

POWER OF MUSIC

[Composed 1806.—Published 1807.]

AN Orpheus! an Orpheus! yes, Faith
may grow bold,
And take to herself all the wonders of
old;—
Near the stately Pantheon you'll meet
with the same
In the street that from Oxford hath bor-
rowed its name.

His station is there; and he works on the
crowd, 5
He sways them with harmony merry and
loud;
He fills with his power all their hearts to
the brim—
Was aught ever heard like his fiddle and
him?

What an eager assembly! what an empire
is this!
The weary have life, and the hungry have
bliss; 10
The mourner is cheered, and the anxious
have rest;
And the guilt-burthened soul is no longer
oppress.

As the Moon brightens 'round her the
clouds of the night,
So He, where he stands, is a centre of
light;
It gleams on the face, there, of dusky-
browed Jack, 15
And the pale-visaged Baker's, with basket
on back.

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

That errand-bound 'Prentice was passing
in haste—

What matter! he's caught—and his time
runs to waste;

The Newsman is stopped, though he stops
on the fret;

And the half-breathless Lamplighter—
he's in the net! 20

The Porter sits down on the weight which
he bore;

The Lass with her barrow wheels hither
her store;—

If a thief could be here he might pilfer at
ease;

She sees the Musician, 'tis all that she
sees!

He stands, backed by the wall;—he abates
not his din; 25

His hat gives him vigour, with boons
dropping in,

From the old and the young, from the
poorest; and there!

The one-pennied Boy has his penny to
spare.

O blest are the hearers, and proud be the
hand

Of the pleasure it spreads through so
thankful a band; 30

I am glad for him, blind as he is!—all the
while

If they speak 'tis to praise, and they
praise with a smile.

That tall Man, a giant in bulk and in
height,

Not an inch of his body is free from
delight;

Can he keep himself still, if he would?
oh, not he! 35

The music stirs in him like wind through
a tree.

Mark that Cripple who leans on his
crutch; like a tower

That long has leaned forward, leans hour
after hour!—

That Mother, whose spirit in fetters is
bound,

While she dandles the Babe in her arms
to the sound. 40

Now, coaches and chariots! roar on like a
stream;

Here are twenty souls happy as souls in
a dream:

They are deaf to your murmurs—they
care not for you,

Nor what ye are flying, nor what ye
pursue!

XV

STAR-GAZERS

[Composed 1806.—Published 1807.]

WHAT crowd is this? what have we here?
we must not pass it by;

A Telescope upon its frame, and pointed
to the sky:

Long is it as a barber's pole, or mast of
little boat,

Some little pleasure-skiff, that doth on
Thames's waters float.

The Showman chooses well his place, 'tis
Leicester's busy Square; 5

And is as happy in his night, for the
heavens are blue and fair;

Calm, though impatient, is the crowd;
each stands ready with the fee,

And envies him that's looking;—what an
insight must it be!

Yet, Showman, where can lie the cause?
Shall thy Implement have blame,

A boaster that, when he is tried, fails, and
is put to shame? 10

Or is it good as others are, and be their
eyes in fault?

Their eyes, or minds? or, finally, is yon
resplendent vault?

Is nothing of that radiant pomp so good
as we have here?

Or gives a thing but small delight that
never can be dear?

The silver moon with all her vales, and
hills of mightiest fame, 15

Doth she betray us when they're seen? or
are they but a name?

Or is it rather that Conceit rapacious is
and strong,

And bounty never yields so much but it
seems to do her wrong?

Or is it that, when human Souls a journey
long have had

And are returned into themselves, they
cannot but be sad? 20

Or must we be constrained to think that
these Spectators rude,

Poor in estate, of manners base, men of
the multitude,

Have souls which never yet have risen,
and therefore prostrate lie?

No, no, this cannot be;—men thirst for
power and majesty!

Does, then, a deep and earnest thought
the blissful mind employ 25

Of him who gazes, or has gazed? a grave
and steady joy,

That doth reject all show of pride, admits
no outward sign,

Because not of this noisy world, but silent
and divine!

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

Whatever be the cause, 'tis sure that they
 who pry and pore
 Seem to meet with little gain, seem less
 happy than before: 30
 One after One they take their turn, nor
 have I one espied
 That doth not slackly go away, as if dis-
 satisfied.

XVI

WRITTEN IN MARCH

WHILE RESTING ON THE BRIDGE AT THE
 FOOT OF BROTHER'S WATER

[Composed April 16, 1802.—Published 1807.]

THE Cock is crowing,
 The stream is flowing,
 The small birds twitter,
 The lake doth glitter,
 The green field sleeps in the sun; 5
 The oldest and youngest
 Are at work with the strongest;
 The cattle are grazing,
 Their heads never raising;
 There are forty feeding like one! 10

Like an army defeated
 The snow hath retreated,
 And now doth fare ill
 On the top of the bare hill;
 The Ploughboy is whooping—anon—
 anon: 15
 There's joy in the mountains;
 There's life in the fountains;
 Small clouds are sailing,
 Blue sky prevailing;
 The rain is over and gone! 20

XVII

[Composed (?).—Published 1842.]

LYRE! though such power do in thy magic
 live
 As might from India's farthest plain
 Recall the not unwilling Maid,
 Assist me to detain
 The lovely Fugitive: 5
 Check with thy notes the impulse which,
 betrayed
 By her sweet farewell looks, I longed to
 aid.
 Here let me gaze enrapt upon that eye,
 The impregnable and awe-inspiring fort
 Of contemplation, the calm port 10
 By reason fenced from winds that sigh
 Among the restless sails of vanity.
 But if no wish be hers that we should
 part,
 A humbler bliss would satisfy my heart.
 Where all things are so fair, 15

Enough by her dear side to breathe the
 air

Of this Elysian weather;
 And on or in, or near, the brook, espy
 Shade upon the sunshine lying
 Faint and somewhat pensively;
 And downward Image gaily vying 21
 With its upright living tree
 'Mid silver clouds, and openings of blue
 sky
 As soft almost and deep as her cerulean
 eye.

Nor less the joy with many a glance 25
 Cast up the Stream or down at her be-
 seeing,
 To mark its eddying foam-balls prettily
 distrest
 By ever-changing shape and want of rest;
 Or watch, with mutual teaching,
 The current as it plays 30
 In flashing leaps and stealthy
 creeps
 Adown a rocky maze;
 Or note (translucent summer's happiest
 chance!)
 In the slope-channel floored with pebbles
 bright,
 Stones of all hues, gem emulous of gem,
 So vivid that they take from keenest
 sight 36
 The liquid veil that seeks not to hide
 them.

XVIII

BEGGARS

[Composed March 13, 14, 1802.—Published 1807.]

SHE had a tall man's height or more;
 Her face from summer's noontide heat
 No bonnet shaded, but she wore
 A mantle, to her very feet
 Descending with a graceful flow, 5
 And on her head a cap as white as new-
 fallen snow.

Her skin was of Egyptian brown:
 Haughty, as if her eye had seen
 Its own light to a distance thrown,
 She towered, fit person for a Queen 10
 To lead those ancient Amazonian files;
 Or ruling Bandit's wife among the Grecian
 isles.

Advancing, forth she stretched her hand
 And begged an alms with doleful plea
 That ceased not; on our English land 15
 Such woes, I knew, could never be;
 And yet a boon I gave her, for the creature
 Was beautiful to see—a weed of glorious
 feature.

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

I left her, and pursued my way;
And soon before me did espy 20
A pair of little Boys at play,
Chasing a crimson butterfly;
The taller followed with his hat in hand,
Wreathed round with yellow flowers the
gayest of the land.

The other wore a rimless crown 25
With leaves of laurel stuck about;
And while both followed up and down,
Each whooping with a merry shout,
In their fraternal features I could trace
Unquestionable lines of that wild Sup-
pliant's face. 30

Yet they, so blithe of heart, seemed fit
For finest tasks of earth or air:
Wings let them have, and they might flit
Precursors to Aurora's car,
Scattering fresh flowers; though happier
far, I ween, 35
To hunt their fluttering game o'er rock
and level green.

They dart across my path—but lo,
Each ready with a plaintive whine!
Said I, 'not half an hour ago
Your Mother has had alms of mine.' 40
'That cannot be,' one answered—'she is
dead.'—

I looked reproof—they saw—but neither
hung his head.

'She has been dead, Sir, many a day.'—
'Hush, boys! you're telling me a lie;
It was your Mother, as I say!' 45
And, in the twinkling of an eye,
'Come! come!' cried one, and without
more ado
Off to some other play the joyous Vagrants
flew!

XIX

SEQUEL TO THE FOREGOING

COMPOSED MANY YEARS AFTER

[Composed 1817.—Published 1827.]

WHERE are they now, those wanton Boys?
For whose free range the dædal earth
Was filled with animated toys,
And implements of frolic mirth;
With tools for ready wit to guide; 5
And ornaments of seemlier pride,
More fresh, more bright, than princes
wear;
For what one moment flung aside,
Another could repair;
What good or evil have they seen 10
Since I their pastime witnessed here,
Their daring wiles, their sportive cheer?
I ask—but all is dark between!

They met me in a genial hour,
When universal nature breathed 15
As with the breath of one sweet flower,—
A time to overrule the power
Of discontent, and check the birth
Of thoughts with better thoughts at strife,
The most familiar bane of life 20
Since parting Innocence bequeathed
Mortality to Earth!
Soft clouds, the whitest of the year,
Sailed through the sky—the brooks ran
clear;
The lambs from rock to rock were bound-
ing; 25
With songs the budded groves resound-
ing;
And to my heart are still endeared
The thoughts with which it then was
cheered;
The faith which saw that gladsome pair
Walk through the fire with unsinged hair.
Or, if such faith must needs deceive— 31
Then, Spirits of beauty and of grace,
Associates in that eager chase;
Ye, who within the blameless mind
Your favourite seat of empire find— 35
Kind Spirits! may we not believe
That they, so happy and so fair
Through your sweet influence, and the
care
Of pitying Heaven, at least were free
From touch of deadly injury? 40
Destined, whate'er their earthly doom,
For mercy and immortal bloom?

XX

GIPSIES

[Composed 1807.—Published 1807.]

YET are they here the same unbroken knot
Of human Beings, in the self-same spot!
Men, women, children, yea the frame
Of the whole spectacle the same!
Only their fire seems bolder, yielding 5
light,
Now deep and red, the colouring of night;
That on their Gipsy-faces falls,
Their bed of straw and blanket-walls.
—Twelve hours, twelve bounteous hours
are gone, while I
Have been a traveller under open sky, 10
Much witnessing of change and cheer,
Yet as I left I find them here!
The weary Sun betook himself to rest;—
Then issued Vesper from the fulgent west,
Outshining like a visible God 15
The glorious path in which he trod.
And now, ascending, after one dark hour
And one night's diminution of her power,
Behold the mighty Moon! this way
She looks as if at them—but they 20

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

Regard not her:—oh, better wrong and strife
 (By nature transient) than this torpid life;
 Life which the very stars reprove
 As on their silent tasks they move!
 Yet, witness all that stirs in heaven or earth!
 In scorn I speak not;—they are what their birth
 And breeding suffer them to be;
 Wild outcasts of society!

XXI

RUTH

[Composed 1799.—Published 1800.]

WHEN Ruth was left half desolate,
 Her Father took another Mate;
 And Ruth, not seven years old,
 A slighted child, at her own will
 Went wandering over dale and hill,
 In thoughtless freedom, bold.
 And she had made a pipe of straw,
 And music from that pipe could draw
 Like sounds of winds and floods;
 Had built a bower upon the green,
 As if she from her birth had been
 An infant of the woods.
 Beneath her father's roof, alone
 She seemed to live; her thoughts her own;
 Herself her own delight;
 Pleased with herself, nor sad, nor gay;
 And, passing thus the live-long day,
 She grew to woman's height.
 There came a Youth from Georgia's
 shore—
 A military casque he wore,
 With splendid feathers drest;
 He brought them from the Cherokees;
 The feathers nodded in the breeze,
 And made a gallant crest.
 From Indian blood you deem him sprung:
 But no! he spake the English tongue,
 And bore a soldier's name;
 And, when America was free
 From battle and from jeopardy,
 He 'cross the ocean came.
 With hues of genius on his cheek
 In finest tones the Youth could speak:
 —While he was yet a boy,
 The moon, the glory of the sun,
 And streams that murmur as they run,
 Had been his dearest joy.
 He was a lovely Youth! I guess
 The panther in the wilderness
 Was not so fair as he;
 And, when he chose to sport and play,
 No dolphin ever was so gay
 Upon the tropic sea.

Among the Indians he had fought,
 And with him many tales he brought
 Of pleasure and of fear;
 Such tales as told to any maid
 By such a Youth, in the green shade,
 Were perilous to hear.

He told of girls—a happy rout!
 Who quit their fold with dance and shout,
 Their pleasant Indian town,
 To gather strawberries all day long;
 Returning with a choral song
 When daylight is gone down.

He spake of plants that hourly change
 Their blossoms, through a boundless range
 Of intermingling hues;
 With budding, fading, faded flowers
 They stand the wonder of the bowers
 From morn to evening dews.

He told of the magnolia, spread
 High as a cloud, high over head!
 The cypress and her spire;
 —Of flowers that with one scarlet gleam
 Cover a hundred leagues, and seem
 To set the hills on fire.

The Youth of green savannahs spake,
 And many an endless, endless lake,
 With all its fairy crowds
 Of islands, that together lie
 As quietly as spots of sky
 Among the evening clouds.

'How pleasant,' then he said, 'it were
 A fisher or a hunter there,
 In sunshine or in shade
 To wander with an easy mind;
 And build a household fire, and find
 A home in every glade!

'What days and what bright years! Ah
 me!
 Our life were life indeed, with thee
 So passed in quiet bliss,
 And all the while,' said he, 'to know
 That we were in a world of woe,
 On such an earth as this!'

And then he sometimes interwove
 Fond thoughts about a father's love:
 'For there,' said he, 'are spun
 Around the heart such tender ties,
 That our own children to our eyes
 Are dearer than the sun.

'Sweet Ruth! and could you go with me
 My helpmate in the woods to be,
 Our shed at night to rear;
 Or run, my own adopted bride,
 A sylvan huntress at my side,
 And drive the flying deer!

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

'Beloved Ruth!'—No more he said.
The wakeful Ruth at midnight shed
A solitary tear:
She thought again—and did agree 100
With him to sail across the sea,
And drive the flying deer.

'And now, as fitting is and right,
We in the church our faith will plight,
A husband and a wife.' 105
Even so they did; and I may say
That to sweet Ruth that happy day
Was more than human life.

Through dream and vision did she sink,
Delighted all the while to think 110
That on those lonesome floods,
And green savannahs, she should share
His board with lawful joy, and bear
His name in the wild woods.

But, as you have before been told, 115
This Stripling, sportive, gay, and bold,
And, with his dancing crest,
So beautiful, through savage lands
Had roamed about, with vagrant bands
Of Indians in the West. 120

The wind, the tempest roaring high,
The tumult of a tropic sky,
Might well be dangerous food
For him, a Youth to whom was given
So much of earth—so much of heaven, 125
And such impetuous blood.

Whatever in those climes he found
Irregular in sight or sound
Did to his mind impart
A kindred impulse, seemed allied 130
To his own powers, and justified
The workings of his heart.

Nor less, to feed voluptuous thought,
The beauteous forms of nature wrought,
Fair trees and gorgeous flowers; 135
The breezes their own languor lent;
The stars had feelings, which they sent
Into those favoured bowers.

Yet, in his worst pursuits I ween
That sometimes there did intervene 140
Pure hopes of high intent:
For passions linked to forms so fair
And stately needs must have their share
Of noble sentiment.

But ill he lived, much evil saw, 145
With men to whom no better law
Nor better life was known;
Deliberately, and undecieved,
Those wild men's vices he received,
And gave them back his own.

His genius and his moral frame
Were thus impaired, and he became
The slave of low desires:
A Man who without self-control 155
Would seek what the degraded soul
Unworthily admires.

And yet he with no feigned delight
Had wooed the Maiden, day and night
Had loved her, night and morn:
What could he less than love a Maid 160
Whose heart with so much nature played?
So kind and so forlorn!

Sometimes, most earnestly, he said,
'O Ruth! I have been worse than dead;
False thoughts, thoughts bold and vain,
Encompassed me on every side 166
When I, in confidence and pride,
Had crossed the Atlantic main.

'Before me shone a glorious world—
Fresh as a banner bright, unfurled 170
To music suddenly:
I looked upon those hills and plains,
And seemed as if let loose from chains,
To live at liberty.

'No more of this; for now, by thee 175
Dear Ruth! more happily set free
With nobler zeal I burn;
My soul from darkness is released,
Like the whole sky when to the east
The morning doth return.' 180

Full soon that better mind was gone:
No hope, no wish remained, not one,—
They stirred him now no more;
New objects did new pleasure give,
And once again he wished to live 185
As lawless as before.

Meanwhile, as thus with him it fared,
They for the voyage were prepared,
And went to the sea-shore,
But, when they thither came, the Youth 190
Deserted his poor Bride, and Ruth
Could never find him more.

God help thee, Ruth!—Such pains she had,
That she in half a year was mad,
And in a prison housed; 195
And there, with many a doleful song
Made of wild words, her cup of wrong
She fearfully caroused.

Yet sometimes milder hours she knew,
Nor wanted sun, nor rain, nor dew, 200
Nor pastimes of the May;
—They all were with her in her cell;
And a clear brook with cheerful knell
Did o'er the pebbles play.

When Ruth three seasons thus had lain,
There came a respite to her pain; 206
She from her prison fled;
But of the Vagrant none took thought;
And where it liked her best she sought
Her shelter and her bread. 210

Among the fields she breathed again:
The master-current of her brain
Ran permanent and free;
And, coming to the Banks of Tone, 215
There did she rest; and dwell alone
Under the greenwood tree.

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

II

The engines of her pain, the tools
That shaped her sorrow, rocks and pools,
And airs that gently stir
The vernal leaves—she loved them still;
Nor ever taxed them with the ill 221
Which had been done to her.

A Barn her winter bed supplies;
But, till the warmth of summer skies
And summer days is gone, 225
(And all do in this tale agree)
She sleeps beneath the greenwood tree,
And other home hath none.

An innocent life, yet far astray!
And Ruth will, long before her day, 230
Be broken down and old:
Sore aches she needs must have! but less
Of mind than body's wretchedness,
From damp, and rain, and cold.

If she is prest by want of food, 235
She from her dwelling in the wood
Repairs to a road-side;
And there she begs at one steep place
Where up and down with easy pace
The horsemen-travellers ride. 240

That oaten pipe of hers is mute,
Or thrown away; but with a flute
Her loneliness she cheers:
This flute, made of a hemlock stalk,
At evening in his homeward walk 245
The Quantock woodman hears.

I, too, have passed her on the hills
Setting her little water-mills
By spouts and fountains wild—
Such small machinery as she turned 250
Ere she had wept, ere she had mourned,
A young and happy Child!

Farewell! and when thy days are told,
Ill-fated Ruth, in hallowed mould
Thy corpse shall buried be, 255
For thee a funeral bell shall ring,
And all the congregation sing
A Christian psalm for thee.

XXII

RESOLUTION AND INDIFFERENCE

[Composed May 3—July 4, 1802.—Published 1807.]

I

THERE was a roaring in the wind all night;
The rain came heavily and fell in floods;
But now the sun is rising calm and bright;
The birds are singing in the distant woods;
Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove 5
broods;

The Jay makes answer as the Magpie
chatters;
And all the air is filled with pleasant
noise of waters.

All things that love the sun are out of
doors;

The sky rejoices in the morning's birth;
The grass is bright with rain-drops;—on
the moors 10

The hare is running races in her mirth;
And with her feet she from the plashy
earth

Raises a mist; that, glittering in the sun,
Runs with her all the way, wherever she
doth run.

III

I was a Traveller then upon the moor; 15
I saw the hare that raced about with joy;
I heard the woods and distant waters roar;
Or heard them not, as happy as a boy:
The pleasant season did my heart employ:
My old remembrances went from me
wholly; 20
And all the ways of men, so vain and
melancholy.

IV

But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the
might
Of joy in minds that can no further go,
As high as we have mounted in delight
In our dejection do we sink as low; 25
To me that morning did it happen so;
And fears and fancies thick upon me came;
Dim sadness—and blind thoughts, I knew
not, nor could name. 28

V

I heard the sky-lark warbling in the sky;
And I bethought me of the playful hare:
Even such a happy Child of earth am I;
Even as these blissful creatures do I fare;
Far from the world I walk, and from all
care;
But there may come another day to me—
Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and
poverty. 35

VI

My whole life I have lived in pleasant
thought,
As if life's business were a summer mood;
As if all needful things would come un-
sought
To genial faith, still rich in genial good;
But how can He expect that others should
Build for him, sow for him, and at his
call 41
Love him, who for himself will take no
heed at all?

VII

I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous
Boy,
The sleepless Soul that perished in his
pride;

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

Of Him who walked in glory and in joy
Following his plough, along the moun-
tain-side: 46
By our own spirits are we defied:
We Poets in our youth begin in gladness;
But thereof come in the end despondency
and madness.

VIII

Now, whether it were by peculiar grace, 50
A leading from above, a something given,
Yet it befell that, in this lonely place,
When I with these untoward thoughts
had striven,
Beside a pool bare to the eye of heaven
I saw a Man before me unawares: 55
The oldest man he seemed that ever wore
grey hairs.

IX

As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
Couched on the bald top of an eminence;
Wonder to all who do the same espy,
By what means it could thither come, and
whence; 60
So that it seems a thing endued with
sense:
Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a
shelf
Of rock or sand reposes, there to sun
itself;

X

Such seemed this Man, not all alive nor
dead,
Nor all asleep—in his extreme old age: 65
His body was bent double, feet and head
Coming together in life's pilgrimage;
As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage
Of sickness felt by him in times long past,
A more than human weight upon his
frame had cast. 70

XI

Himself he propped, limbs, body, and
pale face,
Upon a long grey staff of shaven wood:
And, still as I drew near with gentle pace,
Upon the margin of that moorish flood
Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood,
That heareth not the loud winds when
they call; 76
And moveth all together, if it move at all.

XII

At length, himself unsettling, he the pond
Stirred with his staff, and fixedly did look
Upon the muddy water, which he conned,
As if he had been reading in a book: 81
And now a stranger's privilege I took;
And, drawing to his side, to him did say,
'This morning gives us promise of a
glorious day.'

XIII

A gentle answer did the old Man make,
In courteous speech which forth he slowly
drew: 86
And him with further words I thus be-
spoke,
'What occupation do you there pursue?
This is a lonesome place for one like you.'
Ere he replied, a flash of mild surprise 90
Broke from the sable orbs of his yet-vivid
eyes.

XIV

His words came feebly, from a feeble
chest,
But each in solemn order followed each,
With something of a lofty utterance
drest—
Choice word and measured phrase, above
the reach 95
Of ordinary men; a stately speech;
Such as grave Livers do in Scotland use,
Religious men, who give to God and man
their dues.

XV

He told, that to these waters he had come
To gather leeches, being old and poor: 100
Employment hazardous and wearisome!
And he had many hardships to endure:
From pond to pond he roamed, from moor
to moor;
Housing, with God's good help, by choice
or chance;
And in this way he gained an honest
maintenance. 105

XVI

The old Man still stood talking by my
side;
But now his voice to me was like a stream
Scarce heard; nor word from word could
I divide;
And the whole body of the Man did seem
Like one whom I had met with in a
dream; 110
Or like a man from some far region sent,
To give me human strength, by apt ad-
monishment.

XVII

My former thoughts returned: the fear
that kills;
And hope that is unwilling to be fed;
Cold, pain, and labour, and all fleshly
ills; 115
And mighty Poets in their misery dead.
—Perplexed, and longing to be comforted,
My question eagerly did I renew,
'How is it that you live, and what is it
you do?'

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

XVIII

He with a smile did then his words repeat;
And said that, gathering leeches, far and wide

He travelled; stirring thus about his feet
The waters of the pools where they abide.
'Once I could meet with them on every side;

But they have dwindled long by slow decay;
Yet still I persevere, and find them where I may.'

XIX

While he was talking thus, the lonely place,
The old Man's shape, and speech—all troubled me:

In my mind's eye I seemed to see him pace
About the weary moors continually,
Wandering about alone and silently.

While I these thoughts within myself pursued,
He, having made a pause, the same discourse renewed.

XX

And soon with this he other matter blended,
Cheerfully uttered, with demeanour kind,

But stately in the main; and, when he ended,
I could have laughed myself to scorn to find

In that decrepit Man so firm a mind.
'God,' said I, 'be my help and stay secure;

I'll think of the Leech-gatherer on the lonely moor!'

XXIII

THE THORN

[Composed 1798.—Published 1798.]

I

'THERE is a Thorn—it looks so old,
In truth, you'd find it hard to say
How it could ever have been young,
It looks so old and grey.
Not higher than a two years' child
It stands erect, this aged Thorn;
No leaves it has, no prickly points;
It is a mass of knotted joints,
A wretched thing forlorn.
It stands erect, and like a stone
With lichens is it overgrown.

II

'Like rock or stone, it is o'ergrown,
With lichens to the very top,
And hung with heavy tufts of moss,
A melancholy crop:

Up from the earth these mosses creep,
And this poor Thorn they clasp it round
So close, you'd say that they are bent
With plain and manifest intent
To drag it to the ground;
And all have joined in one endeavour
To bury this poor Thorn for ever.

III

'High on a mountain's highest ridge,
Where oft the stormy winter gale
Cuts like a scythe, while through the clouds

It sweeps from vale to vale;
Not five yards from the mountain path,
This Thorn you on your left espy;
And to the left, three yards beyond,
You see a little muddy pond
Of water—never dry,
Though but of compass small, and bare
To thirsty suns and parching air.

IV

'And, close beside this aged Thorn,
There is a fresh and lovely sight,
A beauteous heap, a hill of moss,
Just half a foot in height.
All lovely colours there you see,
All colours that were ever seen;
And mossy network too is there,
As if by hand of lady fair
The work had woven been;
And cups, the darlings of the eye,
So deep is their vermilion dye.

V

'Ah me! what lovely tints are there
Of olive green and scarlet bright,
In spikes, in branches, and in stars,
Green, red, and pearly white!
This heap of earth o'ergrown with moss,
Which close beside the Thorn you see,
So fresh in all its beauteous dyes,
Is like an infant's grave in size,
As like as like can be:
But never, never any where,
An infant's grave was half so fair.

VI

'Now would you see this aged Thorn,
This pond, and beauteous hill of moss,
You must take care and choose your time
The mountain when to cross.
For oft there sits between the heap,
So like an infant's grave in size,
And that same pond of which I spoke,
A Woman in a scarlet cloak,
And to herself she cries,
"Oh misery! oh misery!"
Oh woe is me! oh misery!"

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

VII

'At all times of the day and night
This wretched Woman thither goes;
And she is known to every star,
And every wind that blows;
And there, beside the Thorn, she sits
When the blue daylight's in the skies,
And when the whirlwind's on the hill,
Or frosty air is keen and still,
And to herself she cries,
"Oh misery! oh misery!"
Oh woe is me! oh misery!"'

VIII

'Now wherefore, thus, by day and night,
In rain, in tempest, and in snow,
Thus to the dreary mountain-top
Does this poor Woman go?
And why sits she beside the Thorn
When the blue daylight's in the sky
Or when the whirlwind's on the hill,
Or frosty air is keen and still,
And wherefore does she cry?—
O wherefore? wherefore? tell me why
Does she repeat that doleful cry?'

IX

'I cannot tell; I wish I could;
For the true reason no one knows:
But would you gladly view the spot,
The spot to which she goes;
The hillock like an infant's grave,
The pond—and Thorn, so old and grey;
Pass by her door—'tis seldom shut—
And if you see her in her hut—
Then to the spot away!
I never heard of such as dare
Approach the spot when she is there.'

X

'But wherefore to the mountain-top
Can this unhappy Woman go,
Whatever star is in the skies,
Whatever wind may blow?'
'Full twenty years are past and gone
Since she (her name is Martha Ray)
Gave with a maiden's true good-will
Her company to Stephen Hill;
And she was blithe and gay,
While friends and kindred all approved
Of him whom tenderly she loved.'

XI

'And they had fixed the wedding day,
The morning that must wed them both;
But Stephen to another Maid
Had sworn another oath;
And, with this other Maid, to church
Unthinking Stephen went—
Poor Martha! on that woeful day
A pang of pitiless dismay
Into her soul was sent;
A fire was kindled in her breast,
Which might not burn itself to rest.'

XII

'They say, full six months after this,
While yet the summer leaves were green,
She to the mountain-top would go,
And there was often seen.
What could she seek?—or wish to hide?
Her state to any eye was plain;
She was with child, and she was mad;
Yet often was she sober sad
From her exceeding pain.
O guilty Father—would that death
Had saved him from that breach of faith!

XIII

'Sad case for such a brain to hold
Communion with a stirring child!
Sad case, as you may think, for one
Who had a brain so wild!
Last Christmas-eve we talked of this,
And grey-haired Wilfred of the glen
Held that the unborn infant wrought
About its mother's heart, and brought
Her senses back again:
And, when at last her time drew near,
Her looks were calm, her senses clear.'

XIV

'More know I not, I wish I did,
And it should all be told to you;
For what became of this poor child
No mortal ever knew;
Nay—if a child to her was born
No earthly tongue could ever tell;
And if 'twas born alive or dead,
Far less could this with proof be said;
But some remember well
That Martha Ray about this time
Would up the mountain often climb.'

XV

'And all that winter, when at night
The wind blew from the mountain-peak,
'Twasworth your while, though in the dark,
The churchyard path to seek:
For many a time and oft were heard
Cries coming from the mountain head:
Some plainly living voices were;
And others, I've heard many swear,
Were voices of the dead:
I cannot think, whate'er they say,
They had to do with Martha Ray.'

XVI

'But that she goes to this old Thorn,
The Thorn which I described to you,
And there sits in a scarlet cloak,
I will be sworn is true.
For one day with my telescope,
To view the ocean wide and bright,
When to this country first I came,
Ere I had heard of Martha's name,
I climbed the mountain's height:—
A storm came on, and I could see
No object higher than my knee.'

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

XVII

'Twas mist and rain, and storm and rain:
No screen, no fence could I discover;
And then the wind! in sooth, it was
A wind full ten times over. 180
I looked around, I thought I saw
A jutting crag,—and off I ran,
Head-foremost, through the driving rain,
The shelter of the crag to gain;
And, as I am a man, 185
Instead of jutting crag I found
A Woman seated on the ground.

XVIII

'I did not speak—I saw her face;
Her face!—it was enough for me;
I turned about and heard her cry, 190
"Oh misery! oh misery!"
And there she sits, until the moon
Through half the clear blue sky will go;
And when the little breezes make
The waters of the pond to shake, 195
As all the country know,
She shudders, and you hear her cry,
"Oh misery! oh misery!"

XIX

'But what's the Thorn? and what the pond?
And what the hill of moss to her? 200
And what the creeping breeze that comes
The little pond to stir?'
'I cannot tell; but some will say
She hanged her baby on the tree;
Some say she drowned it in the pond, 205
Which is a little step beyond:
But all and each agree,
The little Babe was buried there,
Beneath that hill of moss so fair.

XX

'I've heard, the moss is spotted red 210
With drops of that poor infant's blood;
But kill a new-born infant thus,
I do not think she could!
Some say if to the pond you go,
And fix on it a steady view, 215
The shadow of a babe you trace,
A baby and a baby's face,
And that it looks at you;
Whene'er you look on it, 'tis plain
The baby looks at you again. 220

XXI

'And some had sworn an oath that she
Should be to public justice brought;
And for the little infant's bones
With spades they would have sought.
But instantly the hill of moss 225
Before their eyes began to stir!
And, for full fifty yards around,
The grass—it shook upon the ground!
Yet all do still aver
The little Babe lies buried there, 230
Beneath that hill of moss so fair.

XXII

'I cannot tell how this may be,
But plain it is the Thorn is bound
With heavy tufts of moss that strive
To drag it to the ground; 235
And this I know, full many a time,
When she was on the mountain high,
By day, and in the silent night,
When all the stars shone clear and bright,
That I have heard her cry, 240
"Oh misery! oh misery!"
Oh woe is me! oh misery!"

XXIV

HART-LEAP WELL

[Composed January or February, 1800.—Published 1800.]

Hart-Leap Well is a small spring of water, about five miles from Richmond in Yorkshire, and near the side of the road that leads from Richmond to Askrigg. Its name is derived from a remarkable Chase, the memory of which is preserved by the monuments spoken of in the second Part of the following Poem, which monuments do now exist as I have there described them.

THE Knight had ridden down from Wensley Moor
With the slow motion of a summer's cloud,
And now, as he approached a vassal's door,
'Bring forth another horse!' he cried aloud.

'Another horse!'—That shout the vassal heard 5
And saddled his best Steed, a comely grey;
Sir Walter mounted him; he was the third
Which he had mounted on that glorious day.

Joy sparkled in the prancing courser's eyes;
The horse and horseman are a happy pair; 10
But, though Sir Walter like a falcon flies,
There is a doleful silence in the air.

A rout this morning left Sir Walter's Hall,
That as they galloped made the echoes roar;
But horse and man are vanished, one and all; 15
Such race, I think, was never seen before.

Sir Walter, restless as a veering wind,
Calls to the few tired dogs that yet remain:
Blanch, Swift, and Music, noblest of their kind,
Follow, and up the weary mountain strain. 20

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

The Knight hallooed, he cheered and chid
 them on
 With suppliant gestures and upbraidings
 stern;
 But breath and eyesight fail; and, one by
 one,
 The dogs are stretched among the moun-
 tain fern.

Where is the throng, the tumult of the
 race?
 The bugles that so joyfully were blown?
 —This chase it looks not like an earthly
 chase;

Sir Walter and the Hart are left alone.

The poor Hart toils along the mountain-
 side;

I will not stop to tell how far he fled,
 Nor will I mention by what death he died;
 But now the Knight beholds him lying
 dead.

Dismounting, then, he leaned against a
 thorn;

He had no follower, dog, nor man, nor
 boy;

He neither cracked his whip, nor blew his
 horn,

But gazed upon the spoil with silent joy.

Close to the thorn on which Sir Walter
 leaned

Stood his dumb partner in this glorious
 feat;

Weak as a lamb the hour that it is yeaned;
 And white with foam as if with cleaving
 sleet.

Upon his side the Hart was lying stretched:
 His nostril touched a spring beneath a
 hill,

And with the last deep groan his breath
 had fetched

The waters of the spring were trembling
 still.

And now, too happy for repose or rest,
 (Never had living man such joyful lot!)

Sir Walter walked all round, north, south,
 and west,

And gazed and gazed upon that darling
 spot.

And climbing up the hill—(it was at least
 Four roods of sheer ascent) Sir Walter
 found

Three several hoof-marks which the hunt-
 ed Beast

Had left imprinted on the grassy ground.

Sir Walter wiped his face, and cried,
 'Till now

Such sight was never seen by human eyes:
 Three leaps have borne him from this lofty
 brow

Down to the very fountain where he lies.

'I'll build a pleasure-house upon this spot,
 And a small arbour, made for rural joy;
 'Twill be the traveller's shed, the pilgrim's
 cot,

A place of love for damsels that are coy.

'A cunning artist will I have to frame
 A basin for that fountain in the dell!

And they who do make mention of the
 same,

From this day forth, shall call it HART-
 LEAP WELL.

'And, gallant Stag! to make thy praises
 known,

Another monument shall here be raised;
 Three several pillars, each a rough-hewn
 stone,

And planted where thy hoofs the turf
 have grazed.

'And in the summer-time, when days are
 long,

I will come hither with my Paramour;
 And with the dancers and the minstrel's
 song

We will make merry in that pleasant
 bower.

'Till the foundations of the mountains fail
 My mansion with its arbour shall en-
 dure;—

The joy of them who till the fields of
 Swale,

And them who dwell among the woods
 of Ure!

Then home he went, and left the Hart
 stone-dead,

With breathless nostrils stretched above
 the spring.

—Soon did the Knight perform what he
 had said;

And far and wide the fame thereof did
 ring.

Ere thrice the Moon into her port had
 steered,

A cup of stone received the living well;
 Three pillars of rude stone Sir Walter
 reared,

And built a house of pleasure in the dell.

And, near the fountain, flowers of stature
 tall

With trailing plants and trees were inter-
 twined,—

Which soon composed a little sylvan hall,
 A leafy shelter from the sun and wind.

And thither, when the summer days were
 long,

Sir Walter led his wondering Paramour;
 And with the dancers and the minstrel's
 song

Made merriment within that pleasant
 bower.

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

The Knight, Sir Walter, died in course of
time,
And his bones lie in his paternal vale.—
But there is matter for a second rhyme, 95
And I to this would add another tale.

PART SECOND

The moving accident is not my trade;
To freeze the blood I have no ready arts:
'Tis my delight, alone in summer shade,
To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts.

As I from Hawes to Richmond did repair,
It chanced that I saw standing in a dell
Three aspens at three corners of a square;
And one, not four yards distant, near a
well.

What this imported I could ill divine: 105
And, pulling now the rein my horse to stop,
I saw three pillars standing in a line,—
The last stone-pillar on a dark hill-top.

The trees were grey, with neither arms
nor head;
Half wasted the square mound of tawny
green; 110
So that you just might say, as then I said,
'Here in old time the hand of man hath
been.'

I looked upon the hill both far and near,
More doleful place did never eye survey;
It seemed as if the spring-time came not
here, 115
And Nature here were willing to decay.

I stood in various thoughts and fancies
lost,
When one, who was in shepherd's garb
attired,
Came up the hollow:—him did I accost,
And what this place might be I then en-
quired. 120

The Shepherd stopped, and that same
story told
Which in my former rhyme I have re-
hearsed.
'A jolly place,' said he, 'in times of old!
But something ails it now: the spot is
curst.

'You see these lifeless stumps of aspen
wood— 125
Some say that they are beeches, others
elms—
These were the bower; and here a man-
sion stood,
The finest palace of a hundred realms!

'The arbour does its own condition tell;
You see the stones, the fountain, and the
stream; 130
But as to the great Lodge! you might as
well
Hunt half a day for a forgotten dream.

'There's neither dog nor heifer, horse nor
sheep,
Will wet his lips within that cup of stone;
And oftentimes, when all are fast asleep,
This water doth send forth a dolorous
groan. 136

'Some say that here a murder has been
done,
And blood cries out for blood: but, for
my part,
I've guessed, when I've been sitting in the
sun,
That it was all for that unhappy Hart.

'What thoughts must through the crea-
ture's brain have past! 141
Even from the topmost stone, upon the
steep,
Are but three bounds—and look, Sir, at
this last—
O Master! it has been a cruel leap.

'For thirteen hours he ran a desperate
race; 145
And in my simple mind we cannot tell
What cause the Hart might have to love
this place,
And come and make his death-bed near
the well.

'Here on the grass perhaps asleep he sank,
Lulled by the fountain in the summer-
tide; 150
This water was perhaps the first he drank
When he had wandered from his mother's
side.

'In April here beneath the flowering thorn
He heard the birds their morning carols
sing;
And he perhaps, for aught we know, was
born 155
Nor half a furlong from that self-same
spring.

'Now, here is neither grass nor pleasant
shade;
The sun on drearier hollow never shone;
So will it be, as I have often said,
Till trees, and stones, and fountain, all
are gone.' 160

'Grey-headed Shepherd, thou hast spoken
well;
Small difference lies between thy creed
and mine:
This Beast not unobserved by Nature fell;
His death was mourned by sympathy
divine.

'The Being that is in the clouds and air,
That is in the green leaves among the
groves, 166
Maintains a deep and reverential care
For the unoffending creatures whom he
loves.

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

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 them on
 With suppliant gestures and upbraidings
 stern;
 But breath and eyesight fail; and, one by
 one,
 The dogs are stretched among the mountain
 fern.

Where is the throng, the tumult of the
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 The bugles that so joyfully were blown?
 —This chase it looks not like an earthly
 chase;

Sir Walter and the Hart are left alone.

The poor Hart toils along the mountain-
 side;

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 Nor will I mention by what death he died;
 But now the Knight beholds him lying
 dead.

Dismounting, then, he leaned against a
 thorn;

He had no follower, dog, nor man, nor
 boy:

He neither cracked his whip, nor blew his
 horn, 35
 But gazed upon the spoil with silent joy.

Close to the thorn on which Sir Walter
 leaned

Stood his dumb partner in this glorious
 feat;

Weak as a lamb the hour that it is yeaned;
 And white with foam as if with cleaving
 sleet. 40

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 His nostril touched a spring beneath a
 hill,

And with the last deep groan his breath
 had fetched

The waters of the spring were trembling
 still.

And now, too happy for repose or rest, 45
 (Never had living man such joyful lot!)

Sir Walter walked all round, north, south,
 and west,

And gazed and gazed upon that darling
 spot.

And climbing up the hill—(it was at least
 Four roods of sheer ascent) Sir Walter
 found 50

Three several hoof-marks which the hunt-
 ed Beast

Had left imprinted on the grassy ground.

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 'Till now

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 Three leaps have borne him from this lofty
 brow 55

Down to the very fountain where he lies.

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 'Twill be the traveller's shed, the pilgrim's
 cot,

A place of love for damsels that are coy.

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 A basin for that fountain in the dell!

And they who do make mention of the
 same,

From this day forth, shall call it HART-
 LEAP WELL.

'And, gallant Stag! to make thy praises
 known, 65

Another monument shall here be raised;
 Three several pillars, each a rough-hewn
 stone,

And planted where thy hoofs the turf
 have grazed.

'And in the summer-time, when days are
 long,

I will come hither with my Paramour; 70
 And with the dancers and the minstrel's
 song

We will make merry in that pleasant
 bower.

'Till the foundations of the mountains fail
 My mansion with its arbour shall en-
 dure;—

The joy of them who till the fields of
 Swale, 75

And them who dwell among the woods
 of Ure!

Then home he went, and left the Hart
 stone-dead,

With breathless nostrils stretched above
 the spring.

—Soon did the Knight perform what he
 had said;

And far and wide the fame thereof did
 ring. 80

Ere thrice the Moon into her port had
 steered,

A cup of stone received the living well;
 Three pillars of rude stone Sir Walter
 reared,

And built a house of pleasure in the dell.

And, near the fountain, flowers of stature
 tall 85

With trailing plants and trees were inter-
 twined,—

Which soon composed a little sylvan hall,
 A leafy shelter from the sun and wind.

And thither, when the summer days were
 long, 89

Sir Walter led his wondering Paramour;
 And with the dancers and the minstrel's
 song

Made merriment within that pleasant
 bower.

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

The Knight, Sir Walter, died in course of
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And his bones lie in his paternal vale.—
But there is matter for a second rhyme, 95
And I to this would add another tale.

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Three aspens at three corners of a square;
And one, not four yards distant, near a
well.

What this imported I could ill divine: 105
And, pulling now the rein my horse to stop,
I saw three pillars standing in a line,—
The last stone-pillar on a dark hill-top.

The trees were grey, with neither arms
nor head;
Half wasted the square mound of tawny
green; 110
So that you just might say, as then I said,
'Here in old time the hand of man hath
been.'

I looked upon the hill both far and near,
More doleful place did never eye survey;
It seemed as if the spring-time came not
here, 115
And Nature here were willing to decay.

I stood in various thoughts and fancies
lost,
When one, who was in shepherd's garb
attired,
Came up the hollow:—him did I accost,
And what this place might be I then en-
quired. 120

The Shepherd stopped, and that same
story told
Which in my former rhyme I have re-
hearsed.
'A jolly place,' said he, 'in times of old!
But something ails it now: the spot is
curst.

'You see these lifeless stumps of aspen
wood— 125
Some say that they are beeches, others
elms—
These were the bower; and here a man-
sion stood,
The finest palace of a hundred realms!

'The arbour does its own condition tell;
You see the stones, the fountain, and the
stream; 130
But as to the great Lodge! you might as
well
Hunt half a day for a forgotten dream.

'There's neither dog nor heifer, horse nor
sheep,
Will wet his lips within that cup of stone;
And oftentimes, when all are fast asleep,
This water doth send forth a dolorous
groan. 136

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done,
And blood cries out for blood: but, for
my part,
I've guessed, when I've been sitting in the
sun,
That it was all for that unhappy Hart.

'What thoughts must through the crea-
ture's brain have past! 141
Even from the topmost stone, upon the
steep,
Are but three bounds—and look, Sir, at
this last—
O Master! it has been a cruel leap.

'For thirteen hours he ran a desperate
race; 145
And in my simple mind we cannot tell
What cause the Hart might have to love
this place,
And come and make his death-bed near
the well.

'Here on the grass perhaps asleep he sank,
Lulled by the fountain in the summer-
tide; 150
This water was perhaps the first he drank
When he had wandered from his mother's
side.

'In April here beneath the flowering thorn
He heard the birds their morning carols
sing;
And he perhaps, for aught we know, was
born 155
Nor half a furlong from that self-same
spring.

'Now, here is neither grass nor pleasant
shade;
The sun on drearier hollow never shone;
So will it be, as I have often said,
Till trees, and stones, and fountain, all
are gone.' 160

'Grey-headed Shepherd, thou hast spoken
well;
Small difference lies between thy creed
and mine:
This Beast not unobserved by Nature fell;
His death was mourned by sympathy
divine.

'The Being that is in the clouds and air,
That is in the green leaves among the
groves, 166
Maintains a deep and reverential care
For the unoffending creatures whom he
loves.

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

'The pleasure-house is dust:—behind,
before,
This is no common waste, no common
gloom; 170
But Nature, in due course of time, once
more
Shall here put on her beauty and her
bloom.

'She leaves these objects to a slow decay,
That what we are, and have been, may be
known;
But at the coming of the milder day 175
These monuments shall all be overgrown.
'One lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,
Taught both by what she shows, and what
conceals;
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that
feels.' 180

XXV

SONG AT THE FEAST OF BROUGHAM CASTLE

UPON THE RESTORATION OF LORD CLIFFORD,
THE SHEPHERD, TO THE ESTATES AND
HONOURS OF HIS ANCESTORS

[Composed 1807.—Published 1807.]

HIGH in the breathless Hall the Minstrel
sate,
And Emont's murmur mingled with the
Song.—
The words of ancient time I thus translate,
A festal strain that hath been silent long:—

'From town to town, from tower to
tower, 5
The red rose is a gladsome flower.
Her thirty years of winter past,
The red rose is revived at last;
She lifts her head for endless spring,
For everlasting blossoming: 10

Both roses flourish, red and white:
In love and sisterly delight
The two that were at strife are blended,
And all old troubles now are ended.— 15
Joy! joy to both! but most to her
Who is the flower of Lancaster!
Behold her how She smiles to-day
On this great throng, this bright array!
Fair greeting doth she send to all 20
From every corner of the hall;
But chiefly from above the board
Where sits in state our rightful Lord,
A Clifford to his own restored!

'They came with banner, spear, and
shield;
And it was proved in Bosworth-field. 25
Not long the Avenger was withstood—
Earth helped him with the cry of blood:

St. George was for us, and the might
Of blessed Angels crowned the right.
Loud voice the Land has uttered forth, 30
We loudest in the faithful north:
Our fields rejoice, our mountains ring,
Our streams proclaim a welcoming;
Our strong-abodes and castles see
The glory of their loyalty. 5

'How glad is Skipton at this hour—
Though lonely, a deserted Tower;
Knight, squire, and yeoman, page and
groom:
We have them at the feast of Brough'm.
How glad Pendragon—though the sleep
Of years be on her!—She shall reap 41
A taste of this great pleasure, viewing
As in a dream her own renewing.
Rejoiced in Brough, right glad, I deem,
Beside her little humble stream; 45
And she that keepeth watch and ward
Her statelier Eden's course to guard;
They both are happy at this hour,
Though each is but a lonely Tower:—
But here is perfect joy and pride 50
For one fair House by Emont's side,
This day, distinguished without peer,
To see her Master and to cheer—
Him, and his Lady-mother dear!

'Oh! it was a time forlorn 55
When the fatherless was born—
Give her wings that she may fly,
Or she sees her infant die!
Swords that are with slaughter wild
Hunt the Mother and the Child. 60
Who will take them from the light?
—Yonder is a man in sight—
Yonder is a house—but where?
No, they must not enter there. 65
To the caves, and to the brooks,
To the clouds of heaven she looks;
She is speechless, but her eyes
Pray in ghostly agonies.
Blissful Mary, Mother mild,
Maid and Mother undefiled, 70
Save a Mother and her Child!

'Now Who is he that bounds with joy
On Carrock's side, a Shepherd-boy?
No thoughts hath he but thoughts that
pass
Light as the wind along the grass. 75
Can this be He who hither came
In secret, like a smothered flame?
O'er whom such thankful tears were shed
For shelter, and a poor man's bread! 79
God loves the Child; and God hath willed
That those dear words should be fulfilled,
The Lady's words, when forced away
The last she to her Babe did say:
"My own, my own, thy Fellow-guest
I may not be; but rest thee, rest, 85
For lowly shepherd's life is best!"

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

'Alas! when evil men are strong
No life is good, no pleasure long.
The Boy must part from Mosedale's
groves, 89
And leave Blencathara's rugged coves,
And quit the flowers that summer brings
To Glenderamakin's lofty springs;
Must vanish, and his careless cheer
Be turned to heaviness and fear.
—Give Sir Lancelot Threlkeld praise! 95
Hear it, good man, old in days!
Thou tree of covert and of rest
For this young Bird that is distress;
Among thy branches safe he lay,
And he was free to sport and play, 100
When falcons were abroad for prey.

'A recreant harp, that sings of fear
And heaviness in Clifford's ear!
I said, when evil men are strong,
No life is good, no pleasure long. 105
A weak and cowardly untruth!
Our Clifford was a happy Youth,
And thankful through a weary time,
That brought him up to manhood's prime.
—Again he wanders forth at will, 110
And tends a flock from hill to hill:
His garb is humble; ne'er was seen
Such garb with such a noble mien;
Among the shepherd-grooms no mate
Hath he, a Child of strength and state!
Yet lacks not friends for simple glee, 116
Nor yet for higher sympathy.
To his side the fallow-deer
Came, and rested without fear;
The eagle, lord of land and sea, 120
Stooped down to pay him fealty;
And both the undying fish that swim
Through Bowscale-tarn did wait on him;
The pair were servants of his eye
In their immortality; 125
And glancing, gleaming, dark or bright,
Moved to and fro, for his delight.
He knew the rocks which Angels haunt
Upon the mountains visitant;
He hath kenned them taking wing: 130
And into caves where Faeries sing
He hath entered; and been told
By Voices how men lived of old.
Among the heavens his eye can see
The face of thing that is to be; 135
And, if that men report him right,
His tongue could whisper words of might.
—Now another day is come,
Fitter hope, and nobler doom;
He hath thrown aside his crook, 140
And hath buried deep his book;
Armour rusting in his halls
On the blood of Clifford calls;—
"Quell the Scot," exclaims the Lance— 145
Bear me to the heart of France,
Is the longing of the Shield—
Tell thy name, thou trembling Field;
Field of death, where'er thou be,

Groan thou with our victory!
Happy day, and mighty hour, 150
When our Shepherd in his power,
Mailed and horsed, with lance and sword,
To his ancestors restored
Like a re-appearing Star,
Like a glory from afar, 155
First shall head the flock of war!

Alas! the impassioned minstrel did not
know
How, by Heaven's grace, this Clifford's
heart was framed:
How he, long forced in humble walks
to go,
Was softened into feeling, soothed, and
tamed. 160

Love had he found in huts where poor
men lie;
His daily teachers had been woods and
rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

In him the savage virtue of the Race, 165
Revenge, and all ferocious thoughts were
dead:
Nor did he change; but kept in lofty place
The wisdom which adversity had bred.

Glad were the vales, and every cottage-
hearth;
The Shepherd-lord was honoured more
and more; 170
And, ages after he was laid in earth,
'The good Lord Clifford' was the name
he bore.

XXVI

LINES

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN
ABBEY, ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE
WYE DURING A TOUR. JULY 13, 1798

[Composed July 13, 1798.—Published 1798.]

Five years have past; five summers, with
the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their moun-
tain-springs
With a soft inland murmur.¹—Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs, 5
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and
connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view

¹ The river is not affected by the tides a few miles
above Tintern.

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

of cottage-ground, these orch-
 its, 11
 Which at this season, with their unripe
 fruits,
 Are clad in one green hue, and lose them-
 selves
 'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
 These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows,
 little lines 15
 Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral
 farms,
 Green to the very door; and wreaths of
 smoke
 Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
 With some uncertain notice, as might seem
 Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless
 woods, 20
 Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
 The Hermit sits alone.

These beauteous forms,
 Through a long absence, have not been to
 me 23
 As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
 But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
 Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
 In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
 Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
 And passing even into my purer mind,
 With tranquil restoration:—feelings too
 Of unremembered pleasure: such, per-
 haps, 31
 As have no slight or trivial influence
 On that best portion of a good man's life,
 His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
 Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
 To them I may have owed another gift,
 Of aspect more sublime; that blessed
 mood, 37
 In which the burthen of the mystery,
 In which the heavy and the weary weight
 Of all this unintelligible world, 40
 Is lightened:—that serene and blessed
 mood,
 In which the affections gently lead us on,—
 Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
 And even the motion of our human blood
 Almost suspended, we are laid asleep 45
 In body, and become a living soul:
 While with an eye made quiet by the
 power
 Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
 We see into the life of things.

If this
 Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft— 50
 In darkness and amid the many shapes
 Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
 Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
 Have hung upon the beatings of my
 heart—
 How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
 O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro' the
 woods, 56
 How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extin-
 guished thought,
 With many recognitions dim and faint,
 And somewhat of a sad perplexity, 60
 The picture of the mind revives again:
 While here I stand, not only with the sense
 Of present pleasure, but with pleasing
 thoughts
 That in this moment there is life and food
 For future years. And so I dare to hope,
 Though changed, no doubt, from what I
 was when first 66
 I came among these hills; when like a roe
 I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
 Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
 Wherever nature led: more like a man 70
 Flying from something that he dreads
 than one
 Who sought the thing he loved. For
 nature then
 (The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
 And their glad animal movements all gone
 by)
 To me was all in all.—I cannot paint 75
 What then I was. The sounding cataract
 Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
 The mountain, and the deep and gloomy
 wood,
 Their colours and their forms, were then
 to me
 An appetite; a feeling and a love, 80
 That had no need of a remoter charm,
 By thought supplied, nor any interest
 Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is
 past,
 And all its aching joys are now no more,
 And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
 Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other
 gifts 86
 Have followed; for such loss, I would
 believe,
 Abundant recompense. For I have learned
 To look on nature, not as in the hour
 Of thoughtless youth; but hearing often-
 times 90
 The still, sad music of humanity,
 Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample
 power
 To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
 A presence that disturbs me with the joy
 Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime 95
 Of something far more deeply interfused,
 Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
 And the round ocean and the living air,
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
 A motion and a spirit, that impels 100
 All thinking things, all objects of all
 thought,
 And rolls through all things. Therefore
 am I still
 A lover of the meadows and the woods,
 And mountains; and of all that we behold
 From this green earth; of all the mighty
 world 105

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

Of eye, and ear,—both what they half
create,¹
And what perceive; well pleased to recog-
nise
In nature and the language of the sense
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the
nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and
soul
Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the
more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I
catch

The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I
make,

Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to
lead

From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil
tongues,

Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish
men,

Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we
behold

Is full of blessings. Therefore let the
moon

Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be ma-
tured

Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh!
then,

If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing
thoughts

Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, per-
chance—

If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes
these gleams

¹ This line has a close resemblance to an admir-
able line of Young's, the exact expression of which
I do not recollect.

Of past existence—wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love—oh! with far deeper
zeal

Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty
cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were
to me

More dear, both for themselves and for
thy sake!

XXVII

[Composed 1803.—Published 1807.]

It is no Spirit who from heaven hath
flown,

And is descending on his embassy;
Nor Traveller gone from earth the heavens
to espy!

'Tis Hesperus—there he stands with glit-
tering crown,

First admonition that the sun is down!
For yet it is broad day-light: clouds pass
by;

A few are near him still—and now the sky,
He hath it to himself—'tis all his own.

O most ambitious Star! an inquest
wrought

Within me when I recognised thy light;
A moment I was startled at the sight:

And, while I gazed, there came to me a
thought

That I might step beyond my natural race
As thou seem'st now to do; might one day
trace

Some ground not mine; and, strong her
strength above,

My Soul, an Apparition in the place,
Tread there with steps that no one shall
reprove!

XXVIII

FRENCH REVOLUTION

AS IT APPEARED TO ENTHUSIASTS AT ITS
COMMENCEMENT.¹ REPRINTED FROM
'THE FRIEND'

Composed 1804.—Published October 26, 1809
(*The Friend*); ed. 1815.]

Oh! pleasant exercise of hope and joy!
For mighty were the auxiliars which then
stood

Upon our side, we who were strong in
love!

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,

¹ This and the Extract, page 89, and the first Piece
of this Class, are from the unpublished Poem of
which some account is given in the Preface to *THE*
EXCURSION.

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

But to be young was very heaven!—Oh!

In which the meagre, stale, forbidding
ways

Of custom, law, and statute, took at once
The attraction of a country in romance!

When Reason seemed the most to assert
her rights,

When most intent on making of herself
A prime Enchantress—to assist the work

Which then was going forward in her
name!

Not favoured spots alone, but the whole
earth,

The beauty wore of promise, that which
sets

(As at some moment might not be unfelt
Among the bowers of paradise itself)

The budding rose above the rose full
blown.

What temper at the prospect did not wake
To happiness unthought of? The inert

Were roused, and lively natures rapt away!
They who had fed their childhood upon

dreams,

The playfellows of fancy, who had made
All powers of swiftness, subtilty, and

strength
Their ministers,—who in lordly wise had

stirred
Among the grandest objects of the sense,

And dealt with whatsoever they found
there

As if they had within some lurking right
To wield it;—they, too, who, of gentle

mood,
Had watched all gentle motions, and to

these
Had fitted their own thoughts, schemers

more mild,
And in the region of their peaceful

selves;—
Now was it that both found, the meek and

lofty
Did both find, helpers to their heart's

desire,
And stuff at hand, plastic as they could

wish;
Were called upon to exercise their skill,

Not in Utopia, subterranean fields,
Or some secreted island, Heaven knows

where!
But in the very world, which is the world

Of all of us,—the place where in the end
We find our happiness, or not at all!

XXIX

[Composed 1806.—Published 1807.]

Yes, it was the mountain Echo,
Solitary, clear, profound,
Answering to the shouting Cuckoo,
Giving to her sound for sound!

Unsolicited reply

To a babbling wanderer sent;

Like her ordinary cry,

Like—but oh, how different!

Hears not also mortal Life?

Hear not we, unthinking Creatures!

Slaves of folly, love, or strife—

Voices of two different natures?

Have not we too?—yes, we have

Answers, and we know not whence;

Echoes from beyond the grave,

Recognised intelligence!

Such rebounds our inward ear

Catches sometimes from afar—

Listen, ponder, hold them dear;

For of God,—of God they are.

XXX

TO A SKYLARK¹

[Composed 1825.—Published 1827.]

ETHEREAL minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!

Dost thou despise the earth where cares
abound?

Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and
eye

Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?

Thy nest which thou canst drop into at
will,

Those quivering wings composed, that
music still!

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood;
A privacy of glorious light is thine;

Whence thou dost pour upon the world a
flood

Of harmony, with instinct more divine;

Type of the wise who soar, but never
roam;

True to the kindred points of Heaven and
Home!

XXXI

LAODAMIA

[Composed 1814.—Published 1815.]

'WITH sacrifice before the rising morn

Vows have I made by fruitless hope in-
spired;

And from the infernal Gods, 'mid shades
forlorn

Of night, my slaughtered Lord have I
required:

Celestial pity I again implore;—

Restore him to my sight—great Jove,
restore!

¹ For Stanza ii of this poem, omitted in 1845 and 1849-50, see note 2, page 121.—Ed.

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

So speaking, and by fervent love endowed
With faith, the Suppliant heavenward
lifts her hands;
While, like the sun emerging from a
cloud,
Her countenance brightens—and her eye
expands;
Her bosom heaves and spreads, her stature
grows;
And she expects the issue in repose.

O terror! what hath she perceived?—O
joy!
What doth she look on?—whom doth she
behold?
Her Hero slain upon the beach of Troy?
His vital presence? his corporeal mould?
It is—if sense deceive her not—'tis He!
And a God leads him, winged Mercury!

Mild Hermes spake—and touched her
with his wand
That calms all fear; 'Such grace hath
crowned thy prayer,
Laodamia! that at Jove's command
Thy Husband walks the paths of upper air;
He comes to tarry with thee three hours'
space;
Accept the gift, behold him face to face!'

Forth sprang the impassioned Queen her
Lord to clasp;
Again that consummation she essayed;
But unsubstantial Form eludes her grasp
As often as that eager grasp was made.
The Phantom parts—but parts to re-unite,
And re-assume his place before her sight.

'Protesiláus, lo! thy guide is gone!
Confirm, I pray, the vision with thy voice:
This is our palace,—yonder is thy throne;
Speak, and the floor thou tread'st on will
rejoice.
Not to appal me have the gods bestowed
This precious boon; and blest a sad
abode.'

'Great Jove, Laodamia! doth not leave
His gifts imperfect:—Spectre though I be,
I am not sent to scare thee or deceive;
But in reward of thy fidelity.
And something also did my worth obtain;
For fearless virtue bringeth boundless
gain.

'Thou knowest, the Delphic oracle fore-
told
That the first Greek who touched the
Trojan strand
Should die; but me the threat could not
withhold:
A generous cause a victim did demand;
And forth I leapt upon the sandy plain;
A self-devoted chief—by Hector slain.'

'Supreme of Heroes—bravest, noblest,
best!
Thy matchless courage I bewail no more,
Which then, when tens of thousands were
deprest
By doubt, propelled thee to the fatal shore;
Thou found'st—and I forgive thee—here
thou art—
A nobler counsellor than my poor heart.

'But thou, though capable of sternest
deed,
Wert kind as resolute, and good as brave;
And he, whose power restores thee, hath
decreed
Thou shouldst elude the malice of the
grave:
Redundant are thy locks, thy lips as fair
As when their breath enriched Thessalian
air.

'No Spectre greets me,—no vain Shadow
this;
Come, blooming Hero, place thee by my
side!
Give, on this well-known couch, one nup-
tial kiss
To me, this day, a second time thy bride!'
Jove frowned in heaven: the conscious
Parca threw
Upon those roseate lips a Stygian hue.

'This visage tells thee that my doom is
past:
Nor should the change be mourned, even
if the joys
Of sense were able to return as fast
And surely as they vanish. Earth de-
stroys
Those raptures duly—Erebus disdains:
Calm pleasures there abide—majestic
pains.

'Be taught, O faithful Consort, to control
Rebellious passion: for the Gods approve
The depth, and not the tumult, of the
soul;
A fervent, not ungovernable, love.
Thy transports moderate; and meekly
mourn
When I depart, for brief is my sojourn—'

'Ah wherefore?—Did not Hercules by
force
Wrest from the guardian Monster of the
tomb
Alcestris, a reanimated corse,
Given back to dwell on earth in vernal
bloom?
Medea's spells dispersed the weight of
years,
And Æson stood a youth 'mid youthful
peers.

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

'The Gods to us are merciful—and they
Yet further may relent: for mightier far
Than strength of nerve and sinew, or the
sway

Of magic potent over sun and star,
Is love, though off to agony distress,
And though his favourite seat be feeble
woman's breast. 90

'But if thou goest, I follow—' 'Peace!'
he said,—

She looked upon him and was calmed and
cheered;

The ghastly colour from his lips had fled;
In his deportment, shape, and mien,
appeared

Elysian beauty, melancholy grace, 95
Brought from a pensive though a happy
place.

He spake of love, such love as Spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and
pure;

No fears to beat away—no strife to heal—
The past unsighed for, and the future
sure; 100

Spake of heroic arts in graver mood
Revived, with finer harmony pursued;

Of all that is most beauteous—imaged
there

In happier beauty; more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air, 105
And fields invested with purpureal gleams;
Climes which the sun, who sheds the
brightest day

Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

Yet there the Soul shall enter which hath
earned 109

That privilege by virtue.—'Ill,' said he,
'The end of man's existence I discerned,
Who from ignoble games and revelry
Could draw, when we had parted, vain
delight,

While tears were thy best pastime, day
and night;

'And while my youthful peers before my
eyes 115

(Each hero following his peculiar bent)
Prepared themselves for glorious enter-
prise

By martial sports,—or, seated in the tent,
Chieftains and kings in council were de-
tained;

What time the fleet at Aulis lay enchained.

'The wished-for wind was given:—I then
revolved 121

The oracle, upon the silent sea;
And, if no worthier led the way, resolved
That, of a thousand vessels, mine should
be

The foremost prow in pressing to the
strand,— 125
Mine the first blood that tinged the Trojan
sand.

'Yet bitter, oft-times bitter, was the pang
When of thy loss I thought, beloved Wife!
On thee too fondly did my memory hang,
And on the joys we shared in mortal life,
The paths which we had trod—these foun-
tains, flowers; 131
My new-planned cities, and unfinished
towers.

'But should suspense permit the Foe to
cry,

"Behold they tremble!—haughty their
array,

Yet of their number no one dares to die?"
In soul I swept the indignity away: 136
Old frailties then recurred:—but lofty
thought,

In act embodied, my deliverance wrought.

'And Thou, though strong in love, art all
too weak

In reason, in self-government too slow;
I counsel thee by fortitude to seek 141

Our blest re-union in the shades below.
The invisible world with thee hath sym-
pathised;

Be thy affections raised and solemnised.

'Learn, by a mortal yearning, to ascend—
Seeking a higher object. Love was given,
Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for that
end; 147

For this the passion to excess was driven—
That self might be annulled: her bondage
prove

The fetters of a dream opposed to love.'—

Aloud she shrieked! for Hermes re-
appears! 151

Round the dear Shade she would have
clung—'tis vain:

The hours are past—too brief had they
been years;

And him no mortal effort can detain:
Swift, toward the realms that know not
earthly day, 155

He through the portal takes his silent way,
And on the palace-floor a lifeless corse She
lay.

Thus, all in vain exhorted and reproved,
She perished; and, as for a wilful crime,
By the just Gods whom no weak pity
moved, 160

Was doomed to wear out her appointed
time,

Apart from happy Ghosts, that gather
flowers

Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.¹

¹ For an account of the important changes—
material as well as formal—introduced from time to
time into this stanza, see Editor's note, p. 901.—ED.

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

—Yet tears to human suffering are due;
And mortal hopes defeated and o'er-
thrown ¹⁶⁵
Are mourned by man, and not by man
alone,
As fondly he believes.—Upon the side
Of Hellespont (such faith was entertained)
A knot of spiry trees for ages grew
From out the tomb of him for whom she
died; ¹⁷⁰
And ever, when such stature they had
gained
That Ilium's walls were subject to their
view,
The trees' tall summits withered at the
sight;
A constant interchange of growth and
blight!

XXXII

DION

[Composed 1816.—Published 1820.]

(SEE PLUTARCH.)

[I]

[FAIR is the Swan, whose majesty, pre-
vailing
O'er breezeless water, on Locarno's lake,
Bears him on while proudly sailing
He leaves behind a moon-illumined wake:
Behold! the mantling spirit of reserve ⁵
Fashions his neck into a goodly curve;
An arch thrown back between luxuriant
wings
Of whitest garniture, like fir-tree boughs
To which, on some unruddled morning,
clings
A flaky weight of winter's purest snows!
—Behold!—as with a gushing impulse ¹¹
heaves
That downy prow, and softly cleaves
The mirror of the crystal flood,
Vanish inverted hill, and shadowy wood,
And pendent rocks, where'er, in gliding
state, ¹⁵
Winds the mute Creature without visible
Mate
Or Rival, save the Queen of night
Showering down a silver light,
From heaven, upon her chosen Favour-
ite!]

[II]

[So pure, so bright, so fitted to embrace
Where'er he turned, a natural grace ²¹
Of haughtiness without pretence,
&c. &c. &c. (Edd. 1820, 1827, 1832).]

¹ For the account of these long-lived trees, see Pliny's "Natural History", lib. xvi, cap. 44; and for the features in the character of Proteus, see the "Iphigenia in Aulis" of Euripides. Virgil places the Shade of Laodamia in a mournful region, among unhappy Lovers,

— His Laodamia
It comes.—

I

SERENE, and fitted to embrace,
Where'er he turned, a swan-like grace
Of haughtiness without pretence,
And to unfold a still magnificence,
Was princely Dion, in the power ⁵
And beauty of his happier hour.
And what pure homage *then* did wait
On Dion's virtues, while the lunar beam
Of Plato's genius, from its lofty sphere,
Fell round him in the grove of Academe,
Softening their inbred dignity austere—
That he, not too elate ¹²
With self-sufficing solitude,
But with majestic lowliness endued,
Might in the universal bosom reign, ¹⁵
And from affectionate observance gain
Help, under every change of adverse fate.

II

Five thousand warriors—O the rapturous
day!
Each crowned with flowers, and armed
with spear and shield,
Or ruder weapon which their course might
yield, ²⁰
To Syracuse advance in bright array.
Who leads them on?—The anxious people
see
Long-exiled Dion marching at their head,
He also crowned with flowers of Sicily,
And in a white, far-beaming, corselet clad!
Pure transport undisturbed by doubt or
fear ²⁶
The gazers feel; and, rushing to the plain,
Salute those strangers as a holy train
Or blest procession (to the Immortals
dear)
That brought their precious liberty again.
Lo! when the gates are entered, on each
hand, ³¹
Down the long street, rich goblets filled
with wine
In seemly order stand,
On tables set, as if for rites divine;—
And, as the great Deliverer marches by,
He looks on festal ground with fruits
bestrown; ³⁶
And flowers are on his person thrown
In boundless prodigality;
Nor doth the general voice abstain from
prayer,
Invoking Dion's tutelary care, ⁴⁰
As if a very Deity he were!

III

Mourn, hills and groves of Attica! and
mourn
Iliuss, bending o'er thy classic urn!
Mourn, and lament for him whose spirit
dreads
Your once sweet memory, studious walks
and shades! ⁴⁵

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

For him who to divinity aspired,
Not on the breath of popular applause,
But through dependence on the sacred
laws

Framed in the schools where Wisdom
dwelt retired,
Intent to trace the ideal path of right 50
(More fair than heaven's broad causeway
paved with stars)

Which Dion learned to measure with
sublime delight;—

But He hath overleaped the eternal bars;
And, following guides whose craft holds
no consent

With aught that breathes the ethereal
element, 55

Hath stained the robes of civil power
with blood,

Unjustly shed, though for the public good.
Whence doubts that came too late, and
wishes vain,

Hollow excuses, and triumphant pain;
And oft his cogitations sink as low 60

As, through the abysses of a joyless heart,
The heaviest plummet of despair can go—
But whence that sudden check? that
fearful start!

He hears an uncouth sound—
Anon his lifted eyes 65

Saw, at a long-drawn gallery's dusky
bound,

A Shape of more than mortal size
And hideous aspect, stalking round and
round!

A woman's garb the Phantom wore,
And fiercely swept the marble floor,—
Like Auster whirling to and fro, 71

His force on Caspian foam to try:
Or Boreas when he scours the snow

That skins the plains of Thessaly,
Or when aloft on Mænalus he stops 75

His flight, 'mid eddying pine-tree tops!

IV

So, but from toil less sign of profit
reaping,

The sullen Spectre to her purpose bowed,
Sweeping—vehemently sweeping—

No pause admitted, no design avowed! 80
'Avaunt, inexplicable Guest!—avaunt,'
Exclaimed the Chieftain—'let me rather
see

The coronal that coiling vipers make;
The torch that flames with many a lurid
flake, 84

And the long train of doleful pageantry
Which they behold, whom vengeful Furies
haunt;

Who, while they struggle from the scourge
to flee,

Move where the blasted soil is not un-
worn,

And, in their anguish, bear what other
minds have borne!

V

But Shapes, that come not at an earthly
call, 90

Will not depart when mortal voices bid;
Lords of the visionary eye whose lid,
Once raised, remains aghast, and will not
fall!

Ye Gods, thought He, that servile Im-
plement

Obeys a mystical intent! 95

Your Minister would brush away
The spots that to my soul adhere;

But should she labour night and day,
They will not, cannot disappear;

Whence angry perturbations,—and that
look 100

Which no philosophy can brook!

VI

Ill-fated Chief! there are whose hopes are
built

Upon the ruins of thy glorious name;
Who, through the portal of one moment's
guilt,

Pursue thee with their deadly aim! 105
O matchless perfidy! portentous lust
Of monstrous crime!—that horror-strik-
ing blade,

Drawn in defiance of the Gods, hath laid
The noble Syracusan low in dust!

Shuddered the walls—the marble city
wept— 110

And sylvan places heaved a pensive sigh;
But in calm peace the appointed Victim
slept,

As he had fallen in magnanimity;
Of spirit too capacious to require
That Destiny her course should change; 115

too just
To his own native greatness to desire
That wretched boon, days lengthened by
mistrust,

So were the hopeless troubles, that in-
volved

The soul of Dion, instantly dissolved.
Released from life and cares of princely
state, 120

He left this moral grafted on his Fate;
'Him only pleasure leads, and peace
attends,

Him, only him, the shield of Jove defends,
Whose means are fair and spotless as his
ends.'

XXXIII

THE PASS OF KIRKSTONE

[Composed 1817.—Published 1820.]

I

WITHIN the mind strong fancies work,
A deep delight the bosom thrills,

Oft as I pass along the fork
Of these fraternal hills:

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

Where, save the rugged road, we find
 No appanage of human kind,
 Nor hint of man; if stone or rock
 Seem not his handy-work to mock
 By something cognizably shaped;
 Mockery—or model roughly hewn,
 And left as if by earthquake strewn,
 Or from the Flood escaped:
 Altars for Druid service fit;
 (But where no fire was ever lit,
 Unless the glow-worm to the skies
 Thence offer nightly sacrifice)
 Wrinkled Egyptian monument;
 Green moss-grown tower; or hoary tent;
 Tents of a camp that never shall be
 razed—
 On which four thousand years have
 gazed!

II

Ye ploughshares sparkling on the slopes!
 Ye snow-white lambs that trip
 Imprisoned 'mid the formal props
 Of restless ownership!
 Ye trees, that may to-morrow fall
 To feed the insatiate Prodigal!
 Lawns, houses, chattels, groves, and
 fields,
 All that the fertile valley shields;
 Wages of folly—baits of crime,
 Of life's uneasy game the stake,
 Playthings that keep the eyes awake
 Of drowsy, dotard Time;—
 O care! O guilt!—O vales and plains,
 Here, 'mid his own unsexed domains,
 A Genius dwells, that can subdue
 At once all memory of You,
 Most potent when mists veil the sky,
 Mists that distort and magnify,
 While the coarse rushes, to the sweeping
 breeze,
 Sigh forth their ancient melodies!

III

List to those shriller notes!—*that* march
 Perchance was on the blast,
 When, through this Height's inverted
 arch,
 Rome's earliest legion passed!
 —They saw, adventurously impelled,
 And older eyes than theirs beheld,
 This block—and yon, whose church-like
 frame
 Gives to this savage Pass its name.
 Aspiring Road! that lov'st to hide
 Thy daring in a vapoury bourn,
 Not seldom may the hour return
 When thou shalt be my guide:
 And I (as all men may find cause,
 When life is at a weary pause,
 And they have panted up the hill
 Of duty with reluctant will)
 Be thankful, even though tired and faint,
 For the rich bounties of constraint;

Whence oft invigorating transports flow
 That choice lacked courage to bestow!

IV

My Soul was grateful for delight
 That wore a threatening brow;
 A veil is lifted—can she slight
 The scene that opens now?
 Though habitation none appear,
 The greenness tells, man must be there;
 The shelter—that the perspective
 Is of the clime in which we live;
 Where Toil pursues his daily round;
 Where Pity sheds sweet tears—and Love,
 In woodbine bower or birchen grove,
 Inflicts his tender wound.
 —Who comes not hither ne'er shall know
 How beautiful the world below;
 Nor can he guess how lightly leaps
 The brook adown the rocky steep.
 Farewell, thou desolate Domain!
 Hope, pointing to the cultured plain,
 Carols like a shepherd-boy;
 And who is she?—Can that be Joy!
 Who, with a sunbeam for her guide,
 Smoothly skims the meadows wide;
 While Faith, from yonder opening cloud,
 To hill and vale proclaims aloud,
 'Whate'er the weak may dread, the
 wicked dare,
 Thy lot, O Man, is good, thy portion
 fair!'

XXXIV

TO ENTERPRISE

[Composed 1820 (?).—Published 1822.]

KEEP for the Young the impassioned
 smile
 Shed from thy countenance, as I see thee
 stand
 High on that chalky cliff of Britain's Isle,
 A slender volume grasping in thy hand—
 (Perchance the pages that relate
 The various turns of Crusoe's fate)—
 Ah, spare the exulting smile,
 And drop thy pointing finger bright
 As the first flash of beacon light;
 But neither veil thy head in shadows dim,
 Nor turn thy face away
 From One who, in the evening of his day,
 To thee would offer no presumptuous
 hymn!

I

Bold Spirit! who art free to rove
 Among the starry courts of Jove,
 And oft in splendour dost appear
 Embodied to poetic eyes,
 While traversing this nether sphere,
 Where Mortals call thee ENTERPRISE.

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

Daughter of Hope! her favourite Child,
Whom she to young Ambition bore, 21
When hunter's arrow first defiled
The grove, and stained the turf with gore;
Thee winged Fancy took, and nursed
On broad Euphrates' palmy shore, 25
And where the mightier Waters burst
From caves of Indian mountains hoar!
She wrapped thee in a panther's skin;
And Thou, thy favourite food to win,
The flame-eyed eagle oft wouldst scare 30
From her rock-fortress in mid air,
With infant shout; and often sweep,
Paired with the ostrich, o'er the plain;
Or, tired with sport, wouldst sink asleep
Upon the couchant lion's mane! 35
With rolling years thy strength increased;
And, far beyond thy native East,
To thee, by varying titles known
As variously thy power was shown,
Did incense-bearing altars rise, 40
Which caught the blaze of sacrifice,
From suppliants panting for the skies!

II

What though this ancient Earth be trod
No more by step of Demi-god
Mounting from glorious deed to deed 45
As thou from clime to clime didst lead;
Yet still the bosom beating high,
And the hushed farewell of an eye
Where no procrastinating gaze
A last infirmity betrays, 50
Prove that thy heaven-descended sway
Shall ne'er submit to cold decay.
By thy divinity impelled,
The Stripling seeks the tented field;
The aspiring Virgin kneels; and, pale 55
With awe, receives the hallowed veil,
A soft and tender Heroine
Vowed to severer discipline;
Inflamed by thee, the blooming Boy
Makes of the whistling shrouds a toy, 60
And of the ocean's dismal breast
A play-ground,—or a couch of rest;
'Mid the blank world of snow and ice,
Thou to his dangers dost enchain
The Chamois-chaser awed in vain 65
By chasm or dizzy precipice;
And hast Thou not with triumph seen
How soaring Mortals glide between
Or through the clouds, and brave the light
With bolder than Icarian flight? 70
How they, in bells of crystal, dive—
Where winds and waters cease to strive—
For no unholy visitings,
Among the monsters of the Deep;
And all the sad and precious things 75
Which there in ghastly silence sleep?
Or adverse tides and currents headed,
And breathless calms no longer dreaded,
In never-slackening voyage go
Straight as an arrow from the bow; 80

And, slighting sails and scorning oars,
Keep faith with Time on distant shores?
—Within our fearless reach are placed
The secrets of the burning Waste;
Egyptian tombs unlock their dead, 85
Nile trembles at his fountain head;
Thou speak'st—and lo! the polar Seas
Unbosom their last mysteries.
—But oh! what transports, what sublime
reward,
Won from the world of mind, dost thou
prepare 90
For philosophic Sage; or high-souled Bard
Who, for thy service trained in lonely
woods,
Hath fed on pageants floating through
the air,
Or calentured in depth of limpid floods;
Nor grieves—tho' doomed thro' silent
night to bear 95
The domination of his glorious themes,
Or struggle in the net-work of thy dreams!

III

If there be movements in the Patriot's soul,
From source still deeper, and of higher
worth,
'Tis thine the quickening impulse to control, 100
And in due season send the mandate
forth;
Thy call a prostrate Nation can restore,
When but a single Mind resolves to
crouch no more.

IV

Dread Minister of wrath!
Who to their destined punishment dost
urge 105
The Pharaohs of the earth, the men of
hardened heart!
Not unassisted by the flattering stars,
Thou strew'st temptation o'er the path
When they in pomp depart
With trampling horses and refulgent
cars— 110
Soon to be swallowed by the briny surge;
Or cast, for lingering death, on unknown
strands;
Or caught amid a whirl of desert sands—
An Army now, and now a living hill
That a brief while heaves with convulsive
throes— 115
Then all is still;
Or, to forget their madness and their woes,
Wrapt in a winding-sheet of spotless
snows!

V

Back flows the willing current of my
Song:
If to provoke such doom the Impious
dare, 120
Why should it daunt a blameless prayer?

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

—**Bold Goddess!** range our Youth among;
Nor let thy genuine impulse fail to beat
In hearts no longer young;
Still may a veteran Few have pride 125
In thoughts whose sternness makes them
sweet;
In fixed resolves by Reason justified;
That to their object cleave like sleet
Whitening a pine tree's northern side,
When fields are naked far and wide, 130
And withered leaves, from earth's cold
breast
Up-caught in whirlwinds, nowhere can
find rest.

VI

But if such homage thou disdain
As doth with mellowing years agree, 135
One rarely absent from thy train
More humble favours may obtain
For thy contented Votary.
She who incites the frolic lambs
In presence of their heedless dams,
And to the solitary fawn 140
Vouchsafes her lessons, bounteous Nymph
That wakes the breeze, the sparkling
lymph
Doth hurry to the lawn;
She who inspires that strain of joyance
holy
Which the sweet Bird, misnamed the
melancholy, 145
Pours forth in shady groves, shall plead
for me;
And vernal mornings opening bright
With views of undefined delight,
And cheerful songs, and suns that shine
On busy days, with thankful nights, be
mine. 150

VII

But thou, O Goddess! in thy favourite Isle
(Freedom's impregnable redoubt,
The wide earth's storehouse fenced about
With breakers roaring to the gales 154
That stretch a thousand thousand sails)
Quicken the slothful, and exalt the vile!—
Thy impulse is the life of Fame;
Glad Hope would almost cease to be
If torn from thy society; 159
And Love, when worthiest of his name,
Is proud to walk the earth with Thee!

XXXV

TO —

ON HER FIRST ASCENT TO THE SUMMIT OF
HELVELLYN

[Composed 1816.—Published 1820.]

INMATE of a mountain-dwelling,
Thou hast clomb aloft, and gazed
From the watch-towers of Helvellyn;
Awed, delighted, and amazed!

Potent was the spell that bound thee 5
Not unwilling to obey;
For blue Ether's arms, flung round thee,
Stilled the pantings of dismay.

Lo! the dwindled woods and meadows;
What a vast abyss is there! 10
Lo! the clouds, the solemn shadows,
And the glistenings—heavenly fair!

And a record of commotion
Which a thousand ridges yield;
Ridge, and gulf, and distant ocean 15
Gleaming like a silver shield!

Maiden! now take flight;—inherit
Alps or Andes—they are thine!
With the morning's roseate Spirit
Sweep their length of snowy line; 20

Or survey their bright dominions
In the gorgeous colours drest
Flung from off the purple pinions,
Evening spreads throughout the west!

Thine are all the choral¹ fountains 25
Warbling in each sparry vault
Of the untrodden lunar mountains;
Listen to their songs!—or halt,

To Niphates' top invited,
Whither spiteful Satan steered; 30
Or descend where the ark alighted,
When the green earth re-appeared;

For the power of hills is on thee,
As was witnessed through thine eye
Then, when old Helvellyn won thee 35
To confess their majesty!

XXXVI

TO A YOUNG LADY

WHO HAD BEEN REPROACHED FOR TAKING
LONG WALKS IN THE COUNTRY

[Composed 1801 (?).—Published *Morning Post*,
February 11, 1802; ed. 1807.]

DEAR Child of Nature, let them rail!
—There is a nest in a green dale,
A harbour and a hold;
Where thou, a Wife and Friend, shalt see
Thy own heart-stirring days, and be 5
A light to young and old.

There, healthy as a shepherd boy,
And treading among flowers of joy
Which at no season fade,
Thou, while thy babes around thee cling,
Shalt show us how divine a thing 11
A Woman may be made.

Thy thoughts and feelings shall not die,
Nor leave thee, when grey hairs are nigh,
A melancholy slave; 15
But an old age serene and bright,
And lovely as a Lapland night,
Shall lead thee to thy grave.

¹ 'Choral', edd. 1820, 1827; 'coral', 1832-1849.
—Ed.

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

XXXVII WATER FOWL

[Composed 1812 (?).—Published 1823; ed. 1827.]

'Let me be allowed the aid of verse to describe the evolutions which these visitants sometimes perform, on a fine day towards the close of winter.'
—*Extract from the Author's Book on the Lakes* (edition of 1823.—Ed.).

MARK how the feathered tenants of the
flood,
With grace of motion that might scarcely
seem

Inferior to angelical, prolong
Their curious pastime! shaping in mid air
(And sometimes with ambitious wing that
soars

High as the level of the mountain-tops)
A circuit ampler than the lake beneath—
Their own domain; but ever, while intent
On tracing and retracing that large round,
Their jubilant activity evolves
Hundreds of curves and circlets, to and fro,
Upward and downward, progress intricate
Yet unperplexed, as if one spirit swayed
Their indefatigable flight. 'Tis done—
Ten times, or more, I fancied it had ceased;
But lo! the vanished company again
Ascending; they approach—I hear their
wings,

Faint, faint at first; and then an eager
sound,
Past in a moment—and as faint again!
They tempt the sun to sport amid their
plumes;

They tempt the water, or the gleaming ice,
To show them a fair image; 'tis themselves,
Their own fair forms, upon the glimmer-
ing plain,

Painted more soft and fair as they descend
Almost to touch;—then up again aloft,
Up with a sally and a flash of speed,
As if they scorned both resting-place and
rest!

XXXVIII

VIEW FROM THE TOP OF BLACK COMB¹

[Composed 1813.—Published 1815.]

THIS Height a ministering Angel might
select:
For from the summit of BLACK COMB
(dread name

¹ These lines form portion of *The Recluse, Book I*, much of which was undoubtedly composed in 1800. In 1836 Wordsworth assigned them to the year 1812; but his memory on such matters was treacherous, and it is quite possible that they were written as far back as 1800.—Ed.

² Black Comb stands at the southern extremity of Cumberland: its base covers a much greater extent of ground than any other mountain in those parts; and, from its situation, the summit commands a more extensive view than any other point in Britain.

Derived from clouds and storms!) the
amplest range

Of unobstructed prospect may be seen
That British ground commands:—low
dusky tracts,

Where Trent is nursed, far southward!
Cambrian hills

To the south-west, a multitudinous show;
And, in a line of eye-sight linked with

these,
The hoary peaks of Scotland that give
birth

To Tiviot's stream, to Annan, Tweed, and
Clyde:—

Crowding the quarter whence the sun
comes forth

Gigantic mountains rough with crags;
beneath,

Right at the imperial station's western
base,

Main ocean, reaking audibly, and
stretched

Far into silent regions blue and pale;—
And visibly engirding Mona's Isle

That, as we left the plain, before our sight
Stood like a lofty mount, uplifting slowly

(Above the convex of the watery globe)
Into clear view the cultured fields that
streak

Her habitable shores, but now appears
A dwindled object, and submits to lie

At the spectator's feet.—Yon azure ridge,
Is it a perishable cloud? Or there

Do we behold the line of Erin's coast?
Land sometimes by the roving shepherd-
swain

(Like the bright confines of another
world)

Not doubtfully perceived.—Look home-
ward now!

In depth, in height, in circuit, how serene
The spectacle, how pure!—Of Nature's
works,

In earth, and air, and earth-embracing
sea,

A revelation infinite it seems;
Display august of man's inheritance,

Of Britain's calm felicity and power!

XXXIX

THE HAUNTED TREE

TO —

[Composed 1819.—Published 1820.]

THOSE silver clouds collected round the
sun

His mid-day warmth abate not, seeming
less

To overshadow than multiply his beams
By soft reflection—grateful to the sky,

To rocks, fields, woods. Nor doth our
human sense

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

Ask, for its pleasure, screen or canopy
More ample than the time-dismantled Oak
Spreads o'er this tuft of heath, which now,
attired

In the whole fulness of its bloom, affords
Couch beautiful as e'er for earthly use 10
Was fashioned; whether by the hand of
Art,

That eastern Sultan, amid flowers en-
wrought

On silken tissue, might diffuse his limbs
In languor; or by Nature, for repose
Of panting Wood-nymph, wearied with
the chase. 15

O Lady! fairer in thy Poet's sight
Than fairest spiritual creature of the
groves,

Approach;—and, thus in-^{ter}ted, crown with
rest

The noon-tide hour: though truly some
there are

Whose footsteps super-stitiously avoid 20
This venerable Tree; for, when the wind
Blows keenly, it sends forth a creaking
sound

(Above the general roar of woods and
crag)

Distinctly heard from far—a doleful note!
As if (so Grecian shepherds would have
deemed)

The Hamadryad, pent within, bewailed
Some bitter wrong. Nor is it unbeliev-^{ed}, 25
By ruder fancy, that a troubled ghost
Haunts the old trunk; lamenting deeds
of which

The flowery ground is conscious. But no
wind 30

Sweeps now along this elevated ridge;
Not even a zephyr stirs;—the obnoxious
Tree

Is mute; and, in his silence, would look
down,

O lovely Wanderer of the trackless hills,
On thy reclining form with more delight
Than his coevals in the sheltered vale 36
Seem to participate, the while they view
Their own far-stretching arms and leafy
heads

Vividly pictured in some glassy pool,
That, for a brief space, checks the hurrying
stream! 40

XL

THE TRIAD

[Composed 1828.—Published 1829 (*The Keep-
sake*); ed. 1832.]

SHOW me the noblest Youth of present
time,

Whose trembling fancy would to love give
birth;

Some God or Hero, from the Olympian
clime

Returned, to seek a Consort upon earth;

Or, in no doubtful prospect, let me see
The brightest star of ages yet to be, 6
And I will mate and match him blissfully.

I will not fetch a Naiad from a flood
Pure as herself—(song lacks not mightier
power)

Nor leaf-crowned Dryad from a pathless
wood, 10

Nor Sea-nymph glistening from her coral
bower;

Mere Mortals, bodied forth in vision still,
Shall with Mount Ida's triple lustre fill
The chaster coverts of a British hill.

'Appear!—obey my lyre's command!
Come, like the Graces, hand in hand! 16

For ye, though not by birth allied,
Are Sisters in the bond of love;

Nor shall the tongue of envious pride 19
Presume those interweavings to reprove
In you, which that fair progeny of Jove

Learned from the tuneful spheres that
glide

In endless union, earth and sea above.'

—I sing in vain;—the pines have hushed
their waving:

A peerless Youth expectant at my side, 25
Breathless as they, with unabated craving
Looks to the earth, and to the vacant air;

And, with a wandering eye that seems to
chide,

Asks of the clouds what occupants they
hide:—

But why solicit more than sight could
bear, 30

By casting on a moment all we dare?
Invoke we those bright Beings one by
one;

And what was boldly promised, truly
shall be done.

'Fear not a constraining measure!
—Yielding to this gentle spell, 35

Lucida! from domes of pleasure,
Or from cottage-sprinkled dell,

Come to regions solitary,
Where the eagle builds her airy,

Above the hermit's long-forsaken cell!'
—She comes!—behold 41

That Figure, like a ship with snow-white
sail!

Nearer she draws; a breeze uplifts her
veil;

Upon her coming wait
As pure a sunshine and as soft a gale 45

As e'er, on herbage covering earthly
mould,

Tempted the bird of Juno to unfold
His richest splendour—when his veering
gait

And every motion of his starry train
Seem governed by a strain 50

Of music, audible to him alone.

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

- 'O Lady, worthy of earth's proudest throne!
Nor less, by excellence of nature, fit
Beside an unambitious hearth to sit
Domestic queen, where grandeur is unknown; 55
What living man could fear
The worst of Fortune's malice, wert Thou near,
Humbling that lily-stem, thy sceptre meek,
That its fair flowers may from his cheek
Brush the too happy tear? 60
—Queen, and handmaid lowly!
Whose skill can speed the day with lively cares,
And banish melancholy
By all that mind invents or hand prepares;
O Thou, against whose lip, without its smile 65
And in its silence even, no heart is proof;
Whose goodness, sinking deep, would reconcile
The softest Nursling of a gorgeous palace
To the bare life beneath the hawthorn-roof
Of Sherwood's Archer, or in caves of Wallace— 70
Who that hath seen thy beauty could content
His soul with but a *glimpse* of heavenly day?
Who that hath loved thee, but would lay
His strong hand on the wind, if it were bent
To take thee in thy majesty away? 75
—Pass onward (even the glancing deer
Till we depart intrude not here;)
That mossy slope, o'er which the woodbine throws
A canopy, is smoothed for thy repose!'
Glad moment is it when the throng 80
Of warblers in full concert strong
Strive, and not vainly strive, to rout
The lagging shower, and force coy Phœbus out,
Met by the rainbow's form divine,
Issuing from her cloudy shrine;— 85
So may the thrillings of the lyre
Prevail to further our desire,
While to these shades a sister Nymph I call.
'Come, if the notes thine ear may pierce,
Come, youngest of the lovely Three, 90
Submissive to the might of verse
And the dear voice of harmony,
By none more deeply felt than Thee!'
—I sang; and lo! from pastimes virginal
She hastens to the tents 95
Of nature, and the lonely elements.
Air sparkles round her with a dazzling sheen;
But mark her glowing cheek, her vesture green!
And, as if wishful to disarm
Or to repay the potent Charm, 100
She bears the stringed lute of old romance,
That cheered the trellised arbour's privacy,
And soothed war-wearied knights in raft-
ered hall.
How vivid, yet how delicate, her glee!
So tripped the Muse, inventress of the dance; 105
So, truant in waste woods, the blithe Euphrosyne!
But the ringlets of that head
Why are they ungarlanded?
Why bedeck her temples less
Than the simplest shepherdess? 110
Is it not a brow inviting
Choicest flowers that ever breathed,
Which the myrtle would delight in
With Idalian rose enwreathed?
But her humility is well content 115
With *one* wild floweret (call it not forlorn)
FLOWER OF THE WINDS, beneath her bosom worn—
Yet more for love than ornament.
Open, ye thickets! let her fly,
Swift as a Thracian Nymph o'er field and height! 120
For She, to all but those who love her, shy,
Would gladly vanish from a Stranger's sight;
Though, where she is beloved and loves,
Light as the wheeling butterfly she moves;
Her happy spirit as a bird is free, 125
That rifles blossoms on a tree,
Turning them inside out with arch audacity.
Alas! how little can a moment show
Of an eye where feeling plays
In ten thousand dewy rays; 130
A face o'er which a thousand shadows go!
—She stops—is fastened to that rivulet's side;
And there (while, with sedater mien,
O'er timid waters that have scarcely left
Their birthplace in the rocky cleft 135
She bends) at leisure may be seen
Features to old ideal grace allied,
Amid their smiles and dimples dignified—
Fit countenance for the soul of primal truth;
The bland composure of eternal youth!
What more changeful than the sea? 141
But over his great tides
Fidelity presides;
And this light-hearted Maiden constant
is as he.
High is her aim as heaven above, 145
And wide as ether her good-will;
And, like the lowly reed, her love
Can drink its nurture from the scantiest rill:

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

Insight as keen as frosty star
Is to her charity no bar, 150
Nor interrupts her frolic graces
When she is, far from these wild places,
Encircled by familiar faces.

O the charm that innuendoes draw,
Nature, from thy genuine law! 155
If from what her hand would do,
Her voice would utter, aught ensue
Untoward or unfit;
She, in benign affections pure,
In self-forgetfulness secure, 160
Sheds round the transient harm or vague
mischance

A light unknown to tutored elegance:
Hers is not a cheek shame-stricken,
But her blushes are joy-flushes;
And the fault (if fault it be) 165
Only ministers to quicken
Laughter-loving gaiety,
And kindle sportive wit—
Leaving this Daughter of the mountains
free,
As if she knew that Oberon king of
Faery 170
Had crossed her purpose with some quaint
vagary,
And heard his viewless bands
Over their mirthful triumph clapping
hands.

‘Last of the Three, though eldest born,
Reveal thyself, like pensive Morn 175
Touched by the skylark’s earliest note,
Ere humbler gladness be afloat.
But whether in the semblance drest
Of Dawn—or Eve, fair vision of the west,
Come with each anxious hope subdued
By woman’s gentle fortitude, 181
Each grief, through meekness, settling
into rest.

—Or I would hail thee when some high-
wrought page
Of a closed volume lingering in thy hand
Has raised thy spirit to a peaceful stand
Among the glories of a happier age.’ 186

Her brow hath opened on me—see it
there,
Brightening the umbrage of her hair;
So gleams the crescent moon, that loves
To be described through shady groves.
Tenderest bloom is on her cheek; 191
Wish not for a richer streak;
Nor dread the depth of meditative eye;
But let thy love, upon that azure field
Of thoughtfulness and beauty, yield 195
Its homage offered up in purity.
What wouldst thou more? In sunny glade,
Or under leaves of thickest shade,
Was such a stillness e’er diffused
Since earth grew calm while angels
mused? 200

Softly she treads, as if her foot were loth
To crush the mountain dew-drops—soon
to melt
On the flower’s breast; as if she felt
That flowers themselves, whate’er their
hue,
With all their fragrance, all their glisten-
ing, 205
Call to the heart for inward listening—
And though for bridal wreaths and tokens
true
Welcomed wisely; though a growth
Which the careless shepherd sleeps on,
As fitly spring from turf the mourner
weeps on— 210
And without wrong are cropped the mar-
ble tomb to strew.
The Charm is over; the mute Phantoms
gone,
Nor will return—but droop not, favoured
Youth;
The apparition that before thee shone
Obeyed a summons covetous of truth.
From these wild rocks thy footsteps I will
guide 216
To bowers in which thy fortune may be
tried,
And one of the bright Three become thy
happy Bride.

XLI

THE WISHING-GATE

[Composed 1828.—Published 1829 (*The Keep-
sake*); ed. 1832.]

In the vale of Grasmere, by the side of the old
highway leading to Ambleside, is a gate, which,
time out of mind, has been called the Wishing-
gate, from a belief that wishes formed or in-
dulged there have a favourable issue.

HOPE rules a land for ever green:
All powers that serve the bright-eyed
Queen
Are confident and gay;
Clouds at her bidding disappear;
Points she to aught?—the bliss draws near,
And Fancy smooths the way. 6

Not such the land of Wishes—there
Dwell fruitless day-dreams, lawless prayer,
And thoughts with things at strife;
Yet how forlorn, should ye depart, 10
Ye superstitions of the heart,
How poor, were human life!

When magic lore abjured its might,
Ye did not forfeit one dear right,
One tender claim abate; 15
Witness this symbol of your sway,
Surviving near the public way,
The rustic Wishing-gate!

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

Enquire not if the fairy race
Shed kindly influence on the place,
Ere northward they retired;
If here a warrior left a spell,
Panting for glory as he fell;
Or here a saint expired.

Enough that all around is fair,
Composed with Nature's finest care,
And in her fondest love—
Peace to embosom and content—
To overawe the turbulent,
The selfish to reprove.

Yea! even the Stranger from afar,
Reclining on this moss-grown bar,
Unknown, and unknown,
The infection of the ground partakes,
Longing for his Beloved—who makes
All happiness her own.

Then why should conscious Spirits fear
The mystic stirrings that are here,
The ancient faith disclaim?
The local Genius ne'er befriends
Desires whose course in folly ends,
Whose just reward is shame.

Smile if thou wilt, but not in scorn,
If some, by ceaseless pains outworn,
Here crave an easier lot;
If some have thirsted to renew
A broken vow, or bind a true,
With firmer, holier knot.

And not in vain, when thoughts are cast
Upon the irrevocable past,
Some Penitent sincere
May for a worthier future sigh,
While trickles from his downcast eye
No unavailing tear.

The Worldling, pining to be freed
From turmoil, who would turn or speed
The current of his fate,
Might stop before this favoured scene,
At Nature's call, nor blush to lean
Upon the Wishing-gate.

The Sage, who feels how blind, how weak
Is man, though loth such help to seek,
Yet, passing, here might pause,
And thirst for insight to allay
Misgiving, while the crimson day
In quietness withdraws;

Or when the church-clock's knell profound
To Time's first step across the bound
Of midnight makes reply;
Time pressing on with starry crest
To filial sleep upon the breast
Of dread eternity.

XLII

THE WISHING-GATE DESTROYED

[Composed (?)—Published 1842.]

'Tis gone—with old belief and dream
That round it clung, and tempting scheme
Released from fear and doubt;
And the bright landscape too must lie,
By this blank wall, from every eye,
Relentlessly shut out.

Bear witness ye who seldom passed
That opening—but a look ye cast
Upon the lake below,
What spirit-stirring power it gained
From faith which here was entertained,
Though reason might say no.

Blest is that ground, where, o'er the springs
Of history, Glory claps her wings,
Fame sheds the exulting tear;
Yet earth is wide, and many a nook
Unheard of is, like this, a book
For modest meanings dear.

It was in sooth a happy thought
That grafted, on so fair a spot,
So confident a token
Of coming good;—the charm is fled;
Indulgent centuries spun a thread,
Which one harsh day has broken.

Alas! for him who gave the word;
Could he no sympathy afford,
Derived from earth or heaven,
To hearts so oft by hope betrayed;
Their very wishes wanted aid
Which here was freely given?

Where, for the love-lorn maiden's wound,
Will now so readily be found
A balm of expectation?
Anxious for far-off children, where
Shall mothers breathe a like sweet air
Of home-felt consolation?

And not unfelt will prove the loss
'Mid trivial care and petty cross
And each day's shallow grief;
Though the most easily beguiled
Were oft among the first that smiled
At their own fond belief.

If still the reckless change we mourn,
A reconciling thought may turn
To harm that might lurk here,
Ere judgment prompted from within
Fit aims, with courage to begin,
And strength to persevere.

Not Fortune's slave is Man: our state
Enjoins, while firm resolves await
On wishes just and wise,
That strenuous action follow both,
And life be one perpetual growth
Of heaven-ward enterprise.

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

So taught, so trained, we boldly face 55
 All accidents of time and place;
 Whatever props may fail,
 Trust in that sovereign law can spread
 New glory o'er the mountain's head,
 Fresh beauty through the vale.
 60
 That truth informing mind and heart,
 The simplest cottager may part,
 Ungrieved, with charm and spell;
 And yet, lost Wishing-gate, to thee
 The voice of grateful memory
 Shall bid a kind farewell!¹

XLIII

THE PRIMROSE OF THE ROCK

[Composed 1831.—Published 1835.]

A ROCK there is whose homely front
 The passing traveller slights;
 Yet there the glow-worms hang their
 lamps,
 Like stars, at various heights;
 And one coy Primrose to that Rock
 The vernal breeze invites.
 What hideous warfare hath been waged,
 What kingdoms overthrown,
 Since first I spied that Primrose-tuft
 And marked it for my own;
 A lasting link in Nature's chain
 From highest heaven let down!
 The flowers, still faithful to the stems,
 Their fellowship renew;
 The stems are faithful to the root,
 That worketh out of view;
 And to the rock the root adheres
 In every fibre true.
 Close clings to earth the living rock,
 Though threatening still to fall;
 The earth is constant to her sphere;
 And God upholds them all:
 So blooms this lonely Plant, nor dreads
 Her annual funeral.

 Here closed the meditative strain;
 But air breathed soft that day,
 The hoary mountain-heights were cheered,
 The sunny vale looked gay;
 And to the Primrose of the Rock
 I gave this after-lay.
 I sang—Let myriads of bright flowers,
 Like Thee, in field and grove
 Revive unenvied;—mightier far,
 Than tremblings that reprove
 Our vernal tendencies to hope,
 Is God's redeeming love;
 That love which changed—for wan disease,
 For sorrow that had bent
 O'er hopeless dust, for withered age—

¹ See Note, p. 901.

Their moral element, 40
 And turned the thistles of a curse
 To types beneficent.
 Sin-blighted though we are, we too,
 The reasoning Sons of Men,
 From one oblivious winter called 45
 Shall rise, and breathe again;
 And in eternal summer lose
 Our threescore years and ten.
 65
 To humbleness of heart descends
 This prescience from on high, 50
 The faith that elevates the just,
 Before and when they die;
 And makes each soul a separate heaven,
 A court for Deity.

XLIV

PRESENTIMENTS

[Composed 1830.—Published 1835.]

PRESENTIMENTS! they judge not right
 Who deem that ye from open light
 Retire in fear of shame;
 All heaven-born instincts shun the touch
 Of vulgar sense,—and, being such, 5
 Such privilege ye claim.
 10
 The tear whose source I could not guess,
 The deep sigh that seemed fatherless,
 Were mine in early days;
 And now, unforced by time to part 10
 With fancy, I obey my heart,
 And venture on your praise.
 What though some busy foes to good,
 Too potent over nerve and blood,
 Lurk near you—and combine 15
 To taint the health which ye infuse;
 This hides not from the moral Muse
 Your origin divine.
 How oft from you, derided Powers!
 Comes Faith that in auspicious hours 20
 Builds castles, not of air:
 Bodings unsanctioned by the will
 Flow from your visionary skill,
 And teach us to beware.
 The bosom-weight, your stubborn gift, 25
 That no philosophy can lift,
 Shall vanish, if ye please,
 Like morning mist: and, where it lay,
 The spirits at your bidding play
 In gaiety and ease. 30
 35
 Star-guided contemplations move
 Through space, though calm, not raised
 above
 Prognostics that ye rule;
 The naked Indian of the wild,
 And haply too the cradled Child, 35
 Are pupils of your school.

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

But who can fathom your intents,
Number their signs or instruments?

A rainbow, a sunbeam,
A subtle smell that Spring unbinds,
Dead pause abrupt of midnight winds,
An echo, or a dream.

The laughter of the Christmas hearth
With sighs of self-exhausted mirth
Ye feelingly reprove;
And daily, in the conscious breast,
Your visitations are a test
And exercise of love.

When some great change gives boundless
scope

To an exulting Nation's hope
Oft, startled and made wise
By your low-breathed interpretations,
The simply-meek foretaste the springs
Of bitter contraries.

Ye daunt the proud array of war,
Pervade the lonely ocean far
As sail hath been unfurled;
For dancers in the festive hall
What ghastly partners hath your call
Fetched from the shadowy world.

'Tis said that warnings ye dispense,
Emboldened by a keener sense;
That men have lived for whom,
With dread precision, ye made clear
The hour that in a distant year
Should knell them to the tomb.

Unwelcome insight! Yet there are
Blest times when mystery is laid bare,
Truth shows a glorious face,
While on that isthmus which commands
The councils of both worlds she stands,
Sage Spirits! by your grace.

God, who instructs the brutes to scent
All changes of the element,
Whose wisdom fixed the scale
Of natures, for our wants provides
By higher, sometimes humbler, guides,
When lights of reason fail.

XLV

VERNAL ODE

[Composed 1817.—Published 1820.]

'*Rerum Natura tota est nusquam magis quam
in minimis.*—*PLIN. Nat. Hist.*

I

BENEATH the concave of an April sky,
When all the fields with freshest green
were dight,
Appeared, in presence of the spiritual eye
That aids or supersedes our grosser sight,
The form and rich habiliments of One
Whose countenance bore resemblance to
the sun,

When it reveals, in evening majesty,
Features half lost amid their own pure
light.

Poised like a weary cloud, in middle air
He hung,—then floated with angelic ease
(Softening that bright effulgence by de-
grees)

Till he had reached a summit sharp and
bare,
Where oft the venturous heifer drinks the
noontide breeze.

Upon the apex of that lofty cone
Alighted, there the Stranger stood alone;
Fair as a gorgeous Fabric of the east
Suddenly raised by some enchanter's

power,
Where nothing was; and firm as some old
Tower
Of Britain's realm, whose leafy crest
Waves high, embellished by a gleaming
shower!

II

Beneath the shadow of his purple wings
Rested a golden harp;—he touched the
strings;

And, after prelude of unearthly sound
Poured through the echoing hills around,
He sang—

'No wintry desolations,
Scorching blight or noxious dew,
Affect my native habitations;
Buried in glory, far beyond the scope

Of man's enquiring gaze, but to his hope
Imaged, though faintly, in the hue
Profound of night's ethereal blue;
And in the aspect of each radiant orb;—
Some fixed, some wandering with no
timid curb;

But wandering star and fixed, to mortal
eye,

Blended in absolute serenity,
And free from semblance of decline;—
Fresh as if Evening brought their natal
hour,

Her darkness splendour gave, her silence
power,
To testify of Love and Grace divine.

III

'What if those bright fires
Shine subject to decay,
Sons haply of extinguished sires,
Themselves to lose their light, or pass
away

Like clouds before the wind,
Be thanks poured out to Him whose hand
bestows,

Nightly, on human kind
That vision of endurance and repose.

—And though to every draught of vital
breath,
Renewed throughout the bounds of earth
or ocean,

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

The melancholy gates of Death
Respond with sympathetic motion;
Though all that feeds on nether air
Howe'er magnificent or fair,
Grows but to perish, and entrust
Its ruins to their kindred dust;
Yet, by the Almighty's ever-during care,
Her procreant vigils Nature keeps
Amid the unfathomable deeps;
And saves the peopled fields of earth
From dread of emptiness or dearth.
Thus, in their stations, lifting tow'rd the sky
The foliaged head in cloud-like majesty,
The shadow-casting race of trees survive:
Thus, in the train of Spring, arrive
Sweet flowers;—what living eye hath
viewed
Their myriads?—endlessly renewed,
Wherever strikes the sun's glad ray;
Where'er the subtle waters stray;
Wherever sportive breezes bend
Their course, or genial showers descend!
Mortals, rejoice! the very Angels quit
Their mansions unsusceptible of change,
Amid your pleasant bowers to sit,
And through your sweet vicissitudes to
range!

IV

O, nursed at happy distance from the
cares
Of a too-anxious world, mild pastoral
Muse!
That to the sparkling crown Urania wears,
And to her sister Clio's laurel wreath,
Prefer'st a garland culled from purple
heath,
Or blooming thicket moist with morning
dews;
Was such bright Spectacle vouchsafed
to me?
And was it granted to the simple ear
Of thy contented Votary
Such melody to hear!
Him rather suits it, side by side with thee,
Wrapped in a fit of pleasing indolence,
While thy tired lute hangs on the haw-
thorn-tree,
To lie and listen—till o'er-drowsèd sense
Sinks, hardly conscious of the influence—
To the soft murmur of the vagrant Bee.
—A slender sound! yet hoary Time
Doth to the *Soul* exalt it with the chime
Of all his years;—a company
Of ages coming, ages gone;
(Nations from before them sweeping,
Regions in destruction steeping.)
But every awful note in unison
With that faint utterance, which tells
Of treasure sucked from buds and bells,
For the pure keeping of those waxen
cells;
Where She—a statish prudent to confer
Upon the common weal; a warrior bold,

Radiant all over with unburnished gold,
And armed with living spear for mortal
fight;

A cunning forager
That spreads no waste; a social builder;
one
In whom all busy offices unite
With all fine functions that afford delight—
Safe through the winter storm in quiet
dwells!

V

And is She brought within the power
Of vision?—o'er this tempting flower
Hovering until the petals stay
Her flight, and take its voice away!—
Observe each wing!—a tiny van!
The structure of her laden thigh,
How fragile! yet of ancestry
Mysteriously remote and high;
High as the imperial front of man;
The roseate bloom on woman's cheek;
The soaring eagle's curved beak;
The white plumes of the floating swan;
Old as the tiger's paw, the lion's mane
Ere shaken by that mood of stern disdain
At which the desert trembles.—Humming
Bee!

Thy sting was needless then, perchance
unknown,
The seeds of malice were not sown;
All creatures met in peace, from fierceness
free,
And no pride blended with their dignity.
—Tears had not broken from their source;
Nor Anguish strayed from her Tartarean
den;
The golden years maintained a course
Not undiversified though smooth and
even;
We were not mocked with glimpse and
shadow then,
Bright Seraphs mixed familiarly with men;
And earth and stars composed a universal
heaven!

XLVI

DEVOTIONAL INCITEMENTS

[Composed 1832.—Published 1835.]

'Not to the earth confined,
Ascend to heaven.'

WHERE will they stop, those breathing
Powers,
The Spirits of the new-born flowers?
They wander with the breeze, they wind
Where'er the streams a passage find;
Up from their native ground they rise
In mute aerial harmonies;
From humble violet—modest thyme—
Exhaled, the essential odours clime,
As if no space below the sky
Their subtle flight could satisfy:

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

Heaven will not tax our thoughts with
pride
If like ambition be *their* guide.

Roused by this kindest of May-
showers,
The spirit-quickeners of the flowers,
That with moist virtue softly cleaves 15
The buds, and freshens the young leaves,
The birds pour forth their souls in notes
Of rapture from a thousand throats—
Here checked by too impetuous haste,
While there the music runs to waste, 20
With bounty more and more enlarged,
Till the whole air is overcharged;
Give ear, O Man! to their appeal,
And thirst for no inferior zeal,
Thou, who canst *think*, as well as feel. 25

Mount from the earth; aspire! aspire!
So pleads the town's cathedral quire,
In strains that from their solemn height
Sink, to attain a loftier flight;
While incense from the altar breathes 30
Rich fragrance in embodied wreaths;
Or, flung from swinging censers, shrouds
The taper-lights, and curls in clouds
Around angelic Forms, the still
Creation of the painter's skill, 35
That on the service wait concealed
One moment, and the next revealed.
—Cast off your bonds, awake, arise,
And for no transient ecstasies!
What else can mean the visual plea
Of still or moving imagery—
The iterated summons loud,
Not wasted on the attendant crowd,
Nor wholly lost upon the throng
Hurrying the busy streets along?

Alas! the sanctities combined
By art to unsensualise the mind
Decay and languish; or, as creeds
And humours change, are spurned like
weeds:
The priests are from their altars thrust;
Temples are levelled with the dust;
And solemn rites and awful forms 51
Founder amid fanatic storms.
Yet evermore, through years renewed
In undisturbed vicissitude
Of seasons balancing their flight
On the swift wings of day and night,
Kind Nature keeps a heavenly door
Wide open for the scattered Poor.
Where flower-breathed incense to the
skies 60
Is wafted in mute harmonies;
And ground fresh-cloven by the plough
Is fragrant with a humbler vow;
Where birds and brooks from leafy dells
Chime forth unwearied canticles, 65
And vapours magnify and spread
The glory of the sun's bright head—

Still constant in her worship, still
Conforming to the eternal Will,
Whether men sow or reap the fields, 70
Divine monition Nature yields,
That not by bread alone we live,
Or what a hand of flesh can give;
That every day should leave some part
Free for a sabbath of the heart: 75
So shall the seventh be truly blest,
From morn to eve, with hallowed rest.

XLVII

THE CUCKOO-CLOCK

[Composed (?).—Published 1842.]

WOULDST thou be taught, when sleep has
taken flight,
By a sure voice that can most sweetly tell,
How far off yet a glimpse of morning
light,
And if to lure the truant back be well,
Forbear to covet a Repeater's stroke, 5
That, answering to thy touch, will sound
the hour;
Better provide thee with a Cuckoo-clock,
For service hung behind thy chamber-
door;
And in due time the soft spontaneous
shock,
The double note, as if with living power,
Will to composure lead—or make thee
blithe as bird in bower. 11
List, Cuckoo—Cuckoo!—oft tho' tem-
pests howl,
Or nipping frost remind thee trees are
bare,
How cattle pine, and droop the shivering
fowl, 45
Thy spirits will seem to feed on balmy air:
I speak with knowledge,—by that Voice
beguiled, 16
Thou wilt salute old memories as they
throng
Into thy heart; and fancies, running wild
Through fresh green fields, and budding
groves among, 51
Will make thee happy, happy as a child;
Of sunshine wilt thou think, and flowers,
and song, 21
And breathe as in a world where nothing
can go wrong. 55
And know—that, even for him who shuns
the day
And nightly tosses on a bed of pain;
Whose joys, from all but memory swept
away, 25
Must come unhopd for, if they come
again;
Know—that, for him whose waking
thoughts, severe
As his distress is sharp, would scorn my
theme,

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

The mimic notes, striking upon his ear
 In sleep, and intermingling with his
 dream,
 30 Could from sad regions send him to a dear
 Delightful land of verdure, shower and
 gleam,
 To mock the *wandering* Voice beside some
 haunted stream.
 O bounty without measure! while the
 grace
 Of Heaven doth in such wise, from hum-
 blest springs,
 35 Pour pleasure forth, and solaces that trace
 A mazy course along familiar things,
 Well may our hearts have faith that bless-
 ings come,
 Streaming from founts above the starry
 sky,
 With angels when their own untroubled
 home
 40 They leave, and speed on nightly embassy
 To visit earthly chambers,—and for
 whom?
 Yea, both for souls who God's forbear-
 ance try,
 And those that seek his help, and for his
 mercy sigh.

XLVIII TO THE CLOUDS

[Composed (?).—Published 1842.]

ARMY of Clouds! ye winged Host in troops
 Ascending from behind the motionless
 brow
 Of that tall rock, as from a hidden world,
 Oh whither with such eagerness of speed?
 What seek ye, or what shun ye? of the gale
 Companions, fear ye to be left behind,
 Or racing o'er your blue ethereal field? 7
 Contend ye with each other? of the sea
 Children, thus post ye over vale and
 height
 To sink upon your mother's lap—and
 rest? 10
 Or were ye rightlier hailed, when first
 mine eyes
 Beheld in your impetuous march the
 likeness
 Of a wide army pressing on to meet
 Or overtake some unknown enemy?—
 But your smooth motions suit a peaceful
 aim; 15
 And Fancy, not less aptly pleased, com-
 pares
 Your squadrons to an endless flight of
 birds
 Aerial, upon due migration bound
 To milder climes; or rather do ye urge
 In caravan your hasty pilgrimage 20
 To pause at last on more aspiring heights
 Than these, and utter your devotion there
 With thunderous voice? Or are ye jubilant,

And would ye, tracking your proud lord
 the Sun,
 Be present at his setting; or the pomp 25
 Of Persian mornings would ye fill, and
 stand
 Poising your splendours high above the
 heads
 Of worshippers kneeling to their up-risen
 God?
 Whence, whence, ye Clouds! this eager-
 ness of speed?
 Speak, silent creatures.—They are gone,
 are fled, 30
 Buried together in yon gloomy mass
 That loads the middle heaven; and clear
 and bright
 And vacant doth the region which they
 thronged
 Appear; a calm descent of sky conducting
 Down to the unapproachable abyss, 35
 Down to that hidden gulf from which
 they rose
 To vanish—fleet as days and months and
 years,
 Fleet as the generations of mankind,
 Power, glory, empire, as the world itself,
 The lingering world, when time hath
 ceased to be. 40
 But the winds roar, shaking the rooted
 trees,
 And see! a bright precursor to a train
 Perchance as numerous, overpeers the rock
 That sullenly refuses to partake
 Of the wild impulse. From a fount of
 life 45
 Invisible, the long procession moves
 Luminous or gloomy, welcome to the vale
 Which they are entering, welcome to
 mine eye
 That sees them, to my soul that owns in
 them,
 And in the bosom of the firmament 50
 O'er which they move, wherein they are
 contained,
 A type of her capacious self and all
 Her restless progeny. A humble walk
 Here is my body doomed to tread, this
 path,
 A little hoary line and faintly traced, 55
 Work, shall we call it, of the shepherd's
 foot
 Or of his flock?—joint vestige of them
 both.
 I pace it unrepining, for my thoughts
 Admit no bondage and my words have
 wings.
 Where is the Orphean lyre, or Druid
 harp, 60
 To accompany the verse? The mountain
 blast
 Shall be our *hand* of music; he shall sweep
 The rocks, and quivering trees, and bil-
 lowy lake,

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

And search the fibres of the caves, and they
 Shall answer, for our song is of the
 Clouds, 65
 And the wind loves them; and the gentle
 gales—
 Which by their aid re-clothe the naked lawn
 With annual verdure, and revive the
 woods,
 And moisten the parched lips of thirsty
 flowers—
 Love them; and every idle breeze of air
 Bends to the favourite burthen. Moon
 and stars 71
 Keep their most solemn vigils when the
 Clouds
 Watch also, shifting peaceably their place
 Like bands of ministering Spirits, or when
 they lie,
 As if some Protean art the change had
 wrought, 75
 In listless quiet o'er the ethereal deep
 Scattered, a Cyclades of various shapes
 And all degrees of beauty. O ye Light-
 nings!
 Ye are their perilous offspring; and the
 Sun—
 Source inexhaustible of life and joy, 80
 And type of man's far-darting reason,
 therefore
 In old time worshipped as the god of verse,
 A blazing intellectual deity—
 Loves his own glory in their looks, and
 showers
 Upon that unsubstantial brotherhood
 Visions with all but beatific light 86
 Enriched—too transient, were they not
 renewed
 From age to age, and did not, while we
 gaze
 In silent rapture, credulous desire
 Nourish the hope that memory lacks not
 power 90
 To keep the treasure unimpaired. Vain
 thought!
 Yet why repine, created as we are
 For joy and rest, albeit to find them only
 Lodged in the bosom of eternal things?

XLIX

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF THE BIRD OF PARADISE

[Composed (?).—Published 1842.]

THE gentlest Poet, with free thoughts
 endowed,
 And a true master of the glowing strain,
 Might scan the narrow province with
 disdain
 That to the Painter's skill is here allowed.
 This, this the Bird of Paradise! disclaim
 The daring thought, forget the name; 6
 This the Sun's Bird, whom Glendoveers
 might own

As no unworthy Partner in their flight
 Through seas of ether, where the ruffling
 sway
 Of nether air's rude billows is unknown;
 Whom Sylphs, if e'er for casual pastime
 they 11
 Through India's spicy regions wing their
 way,
 Might bow to as their Lord. What
 character,
 O sovereign Nature! I appeal to thee,
 Of all thy feathered progeny 15
 Is so unearthly, and what shape so fair?
 So richly decked in variegated down,
 Green, sable, shining yellow, shadowy
 brown,
 Tints softly with each other blended,
 Hues doubtfully begun and ended; 20
 Or intershooting, and to sight
 Lost and recovered, as the rays of light
 Glance on the conscious plumes touched
 here and there?
 Full surely, when with such proud gifts
 of life
 Began the pencil's strife, 25
 O'erweening Art was caught as in a snare.

A sense of seemingly presumptuous
 wrong
 Gave the first impulse to the Poet's song;
 But, of his scorn repenting soon, he drew
 A juster judgment from a calmer view; 30
 And, with a spirit freed from discontent,
 Thankfully took an effort that was meant
 Not with God's bounty, Nature's love,
 to vie,
 Or made with hope to please that inward
 eye 34
 Which ever strives in vain itself to satisfy,
 But to recall the truth by some faint trace
 Of power ethereal and celestial grace,
 That in the living Creature find on earth
 a place.

L

A JEWISH FAMILY

(IN A SMALL VALLEY OPPOSITE ST. GOAR,
 UPON THE RHINE)

[Composed 1828.—Published 1835.]

GENIUS of Raphael! if thy wings
 Might bear thee to this glen,
 With faithful memory left of things
 To pencil dear and pen,
 Thou wouldst forego the neighbouring
 Rhine, 5
 And all his majesty—
 A studious forehead to incline
 O'er this poor family.
 The Mother—her thou must have seen,
 In spirit, ere she came 10
 To dwell these rifted rocks between,
 Or found on earth a name;

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

An image, too, of that sweet Boy,
Thy inspirations give—
Of playfulness, and love, and joy,
Predestined here to live.

Downcast, or shooting glances far,
How beautiful his eyes,
That blend the nature of the star
With that of summer skies!
I speak as if of sense beguiled;
Uncounted months are gone,
Yet am I with the Jewish Child,
That exquisite Saint John.

I see the dark-brown curls, the brow,
The smooth transparent skin,
Refined, as with intent to show
The holiness within;
The grace of parting Infancy
By blushes yet untamed;
Age faithful to the mother's knee,
Nor of her arms ashamed.

Two lovely Sisters, still and sweet
As flowers, stand side by side;
Their soul-subduing looks might cheat
The Christian of his pride:
Such beauty hath the Eternal poured
Upon them not forlorn,
Though of a lineage once abhorred,
Nor yet redeemed from scorn.

Mysterious safeguard, that, in spite
Of poverty and wrong,
Doth here preserve a living light,
From Hebrew fountains sprung;
That gives this ragged group to cast
Around the dell a gleam
Of Palestine, of glory past,
And proud Jerusalem!

LI

ON THE POWER OF SOUND

[Composed 1828.—Published 1835.]

ARGUMENT

The Ear addressed, as occupied by a spiritual functionary, in communion with sounds, individual, or combined in studied harmony.—Sources and effects of those sounds (to the close of 6th Stanza).—The power of music, whence proceeding, exemplified in the idiot.—Origin of music, and its effect in early ages—how produced (to the middle of 10th Stanza).—The mind recalled to sounds acting casually and severally.—Wish uttered (11th Stanza) that these could be united into a scheme or system for moral interests and intellectual contemplation.—(Stanza 12th).—The Pythagorean theory of numbers and music, with their supposed power over the motions of the universe—imaginings consonant with such a theory.—Wish expressed (in 11th Stanza) realized, in some degree, by the representation of all sounds under the form of thanksgiving to the Creator.—(Last Stanza) the destruction of earth and the planetary system—the survival of audible harmony, and its support in the Divine Nature, as revealed in Holy Writ.

I

Thy functions are ethereal,
As if within thee dwelt a glancing mind,
Organ of vision! And a Spirit aerial
Informs the cell of Hearing, dark and blind;
Intricate labyrinth, more dread for thought
To enter than oracular cave; 6
Strict passage, through which sighs are
brought,
And whispers for the heart, their slave;
And shrieks, that revel in abuse
Of shivering flesh; and warbled air, 10
Whose piercing sweetness can unloose
The chains of frenzy, or entice a smile
Into the ambush of despair;
Hosannas pealing down the long-drawn
aisle,
And requiems answered by the pulse that
beats 15
Devoutly, in life's last retreats!

II

The headlong streams and fountains
Serve Thee, invisible Spirit, with untired
powers;
Cheering the wakeful tent on Syrian
mountains,
They lull perchance ten thousand thou-
sand flowers. 20
That roar, the prowling lion's *Here I am*,
How fearful to the desert wide!
That bleat, how tender! of the dam
Calling a straggler to her side.
Shout, cuckoo!—let the vernal soul 25
Go with thee to the frozen zone;
Toll from thy loftiest perch, lone bell-
bird, toll!
At the still hour to Mercy dear,
Mercy from her twilight throne
Listening to nun's faint throb of holy fear,
To sailor's prayer breathed from a darken-
ing sea, 31
Or widow's cottage-lullaby.

III

Ye Voices, and ye Shadows
And Images of voice—to hound and horn
From rocky steep and rock-bestudded
meadows 35
Flung back, and, in the sky's blue caves,
reborn—
On with your pastime! till the church-
tower bells
A greeting give of measured glee;
And milder echoes from their cells
Repeat the bridal symphony. 40
Then, or far earlier, let us rove
Where mists are breaking up or gone,
And from aloft look down into a cove
Besprinkled with a careless quire,
Happy milk-maids, one by one 45
Scattering a ditty each to her desire,
A liquid concert matchless by nice Art,
A stream as if from one full heart.

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

IV

Blest be the song that brightens
The blind man's gloom, exalts the veter-
 ran's mirth; 50
Unscorned the peasant's whistling breath,
 that lightens
His duteous toil of furrowing the green
 earth.
For the tired slave, Song lifts the languid
 oar,
And bids it aptly fall, with chime
That beautifies the fairest shore, 55
And mitigates the harshest clime.
Yon pilgrims see—in lagging file
They move; but soon the appointed way
A choral *Ave Marie* shall beguile,
And to their hope the distant shrine 60
Glisten with a livelier ray:
Nor friendless he, the prisoner of the
 mine,
Who from the well-spring of his own
 clear breast
Can draw, and sing his griefs to rest.

V

When civic renovation 65
Dawns on a kingdom, and for needful
 haste
Best eloquence avails not, Inspiration
Mounts with a tune, that travels like a
 blast
Piping through cave and battlemented
 tower;
Then starts the sluggard, pleased to meet
That voice of Freedom, in its power 71
Of promises, shrill, wild, and sweet!
Who, from a martial *pageant*, spreads
Incitements of a battle-day,
Thrilling the unweaponed crowd with
 plumeless heads?— 75
Even She whose Lydian airs inspire
Peaceful striving, gentle play
Of timid hope and innocent desire
Shot from the dancing Graces, as they
 move
Fanned by the plausible wings of Love. 80

VI

How oft along thy mazes,
Regent of sound, have dangerous Passions
 trod!
O Thou, through whom the temple rings
 with praises,
And blackening clouds in thunder speak
 of God,
Betray not by the cozenage of sense 85
Thy votaries, woefully resigned
To a voluptuous influence
That taints the purer, better, mind;
But lead sick Fancy to a harp
That hath in noble tasks been tried; 90
And, if the virtuous feel a pang too sharp;
Soothe it into patience—stay
The uplifted arm of Suicide;

And let some mood of thine in firm array
Knit every thought the impending issue
 needs, 95
Ere martyr burns, or patriot bleeds!

VII

As Conscience, to the centre
Of being, smites with irresistible pain,
So shall a solemn cadence, if it enter
The mouldy vaults of the dull idiot's
 brain, 100
Transmute him to a wretch from quiet
 hurled—
Convulsed as by a jarring din;
And then aghast, as at the world
Of reason partially let in
By concords winding with a sway 105
Terrible for sense and soul!
Or awed he weeps, struggling to quell
 dismay.
Point not these mysteries to an Art
Lodged above the starry pole;
Pure modulations flowing from the heart
Of divine Love, where Wisdom, Beauty,
 Truth 111
With Order dwell, in endless youth?

VIII

Oblivion may not cover
All treasures hoarded by the miser, Time.
Orphean Insight! truth's undaunted
 lover, 115
To the first leagues of tutored passion
 climb,
When Music deigned within this grosser
 sphere
Her subtle essence to enfold,
And voice and shell drew forth a tear
Softer than Nature's self could mould.
Yet *strenuous* was the infant Age; 121
Art, daring because souls could feel,
Stirred nowhere but an urgent equipage
Of rapt imagination sped her march
Through the realms of woe and weal: 125
Hell to the lyre bowed low; the upper
 arch
Rejoiced that clamorous spell and magic
 verse
Her wan disasters could disperse.

IX

The Gift to king Amphion
That walled a city with its melody 130
Was for belief no dream:—thy skill, Arion!
Could humanize the creatures of the sea,
Where men were monsters. A last grace
 he craves,
Leave for one chant;—the dulcet sound
Steals from the deck o'er willing waves,
And listening dolphins gather round.
Self-cast, as with a desperate course, 137
Mid that strange audience, he bestrides
A proud One docile as a managed horse;
And singing, while the accordant hand

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

Sweeps his harp, the Master rides; 141
So shall he touch at length a friendly
strand,
And he, with his preserver, shine star-
bright
In memory, through silent night.

X

The pipe of Pan, to shepherds 145
Couched in the shadow of Mælian
pines,
Was passing sweet; the eyeballs of the
leopards,
That in high triumph drew the Lord of
vines,
How did they sparkle to the cymbal's
clang!
While Fauns and Satyrs beat the ground
In cadence,—and Silenus swang 151
This way and that, with wild-flowers
crowned.
To life, to life give back thine ear:
Ye who are longing to be rid
Of fable, though to truth subservient,
hear 155
The little sprinkling of cold earth that fell
Echoed from the coffin-lid;
The convict's summons in the steeple's
knell;
'The vain distress-gun,' from a leeward
shore,
Repeated—heard, and heard no more!

XI

For terror, joy, or pity, 161
Vast is the compass and the swell of notes:
From the babe's first cry to voice of regal
city,
Rolling a solemn sea-like bass, that floats
Far as the woodlands—with the trill to
blend 165
Of that shy songstress, whose love-tale
Might tempt an angel to descend,
While hovering o'er the moonlight vale.
Ye wandering Utterances, has earth no
scheme,
No scale of moral music—to unite 170
Powers that survive but in the faintest
dream
Of memory?—O that ye might stoop to
bear
Chains, such precious chains of sight
As laboured minstrelsies through ages
wear!
O for a balance fit the truth to tell 175
Of the Unsubstantial, pondered well!

XII

By one pervading spirit
Of tones and numbers all things are con-
trolled,
As sages taught, where faith was found
to merit
Initiation in that mystery old. 180

The heavens, whose aspect makes our
minds as still
As they themselves appear to be,
Innumerable voices fill
With everlasting harmony;
The towering headlands, crowned with
mist, 185
Their feet among the billows, know
That Ocean is a mighty harmonist;
Thy pinions, universal Air,
Ever waving to and fro,
Are delegates of harmony, and bear 190
Strains that support the Seasons in their
round;
Stern Winter loves a dirge-like sound.

XIII

Break forth into thanksgiving,
Ye banded instruments of wind and
chords;
Unite, to magnify the Ever-living, 195
Your inarticulate notes with the voice of
words!
Nor hushed be service from the lowing
mead,
Nor mute the forest hum of noon;
Thou too be heard, lone eagle! freed
From snowy peak and cloud, attune 200
Thy hungry barkings to the hymn
Of joy, that from her utmost walls
The six-days' Work by flaming Seraphim
Transmits to Heaven! As Deep to Deep
Shouting through one valley calls, 205
All worlds, all natures, mood and measure
keep
For praise and ceaseless gratulation,
poured
Into the ear of God, their Lord!

XIV

A Voice to Light gave Being;
To Time, and Man his earth-born chro-
nicler; 210
A Voice shall finish doubt and dim fore-
seeing,
And sweep away life's visionary stir;
The trumpet (we, intoxicate with pride,
Arm at its blast for deadly wars)
To archangelic lips applied, 215
The grave shall open, quench the stars.
O Silence! are Man's noisy years
No more than moments of thy life?
Is Harmony, blest queen of smiles and
tears,
With her smooth tones and discords just,
Tempered into rapturous strife, 221
Thy destined bond-slave? No! though
earth be dust
And vanish, though the heavens dissolve,
her stay
Is in the WORD, that shall not pass
away.

PETER BELL

A TALE

[Composed 1798.—Published 1819.]

'What's in a Name?'

'Brutus will start a Spirit as soon as Cæsar!'

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ., P.L., ETC., ETC.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The Tale of Peter Bell, which I now introduce to your notice, and to that of the Public, has, in its Manuscript state, nearly survived its *minority*:—for it first saw the light in the summer of 1798. During this long interval, pains have been taken at different times to make the production less unworthy of a favourable reception; or rather to fit it for filling *permanently* a station, however humble, in the Literature of our Country. This has, indeed, been the aim of all my endeavours in Poetry, which, you know, have been sufficiently laborious to prove that I deem the Art not lightly to be approached; and that the attainment of excellence in it may laudably be made the principal object of intellectual pursuit by any man, who, with reasonable consideration of circumstances, has faith in his own impulses.

The Poem of Peter Bell, as the Prologue will show, was composed under a belief that the Imagination not only does not require for its exercise the intervention of supernatural agency, but that, though such agency be excluded, the faculty may be called forth as imperiously, and for kindred results of pleasure, by incidents within the compass of poetic probability, in the humblest departments of daily life. Since that Prologue was written, you have exhibited most splendid effects of judicious daring in the opposite and usual course. Let this acknowledgment make my peace with the lovers of the supernatural; and I am persuaded it will be admitted that to you, as a Master in that province of the art, the following Tale, whether from contrast or congruity, is not an inappropriate offering. Accept it, then, as a public testimony of affectionate admiration from one with whose name yours has been often coupled (to use your own words) for evil and for good; and believe me to be, with earnest wishes that life and health may be granted you to complete the many important works in which you are engaged, and with high respect,

Most faithfully yours,
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT,
April 7, 1819.

PROLOGUE

THERE's something in a flying horse,
There's something in a huge balloon;
But through the clouds I'll never float
Until I have a little Boat,
Shaped like the crescent-moon.

5

And now I have a little Boat,
In shape a very crescent-moon:
Fast through the clouds my Boat can sail;
But if perchance your faith should fail,
Look up—and you shall see me soon!

10

The woods, my Friends, are round you
roaring,
Rocking and roaring like a sea;
The noise of danger's in your ears,
And ye have all a thousand fears
Both for my little Boat and me!

15

Meanwhile untroubled I admire
The pointed horns of my canoe;
And, did not pity touch my breast
To see how ye are all distrest,
Till my ribs ached I'd laugh at you!

20

Away we go, my Boat and I—
Frail man ne'er sate in such another;
Whether among the winds we strive,
Or deep into the clouds we dive,
Each is contented with the other.

25

Away we go—and what care we
For treasons, tumults, and for wars?
We are as calm in our delight
As is the crescent-moon so bright
Among the scattered stars.

30

Up goes my Boat among the stars
Through many a breathless field of light,
Through many a long blue field of ether,
Leaving ten thousand stars beneath her:
Up goes my little Boat so bright!

35

The Crab, the Scorpion, and the Bull—
We pry among them all; have shot
High o'er the red-haired race of Mars,
Covered from top to toe with scars;
Such company I like it not!

40

The towns in Saturn are decayed,
And melancholy Spectres throng them;—
The Pleiads, that appear to kiss
Each other in the vast abyss,
With joy I sail among them.

45

Swift Mercury resounds with mirth,
Great Jove is full of stately bowers;
But these, and all that they contain,
What are they to that tiny grain,
That little Earth of ours?

50

- Then back to Earth, the dear green Earth:—
 Whole ages if I here should roam,
 The world for my remarks and me
 Would not a whit the better be;
 I've left my heart at home. 55
- See! there she is, the matchless Earth!
 There spreads the famed Pacific Ocean!
 Old Andes thrusts yon craggy spear
 Through the grey clouds; the Alps are
 here,
 Like waters in commotion! 60
- Yon tawny slip is Libya's sands;
 That silver thread the river Dnieper;
 And look, where clothed in brightest green
 Is a sweet Isle, of isles the Queen;
 Ye fairies, from all evil keep her! 65
- And see the town where I was born!
 Around those happy fields we span
 In boyish gambols;—I was lost
 Where I have been, but on this coast
 I feel I am a man. 70
- Never did fifty things at once
 Appear so lovely, never, never;
 How tunefully the forests ring!
 To hear the earth's soft murmuring
 Thus could I hang for ever! 75
- 'Shame on you!' cried my little Boat,
 'Was ever such a homesick Loon,
 Within a living Boat to sit,
 And make no better use of it; 79
 A Boat twin-sister of the crescent-moon!
- 'Ne'er in the breast of full-grown Poet
 Fluttered so faint a heart before;—
 Was it the music of the spheres
 That overpowered your mortal ears?
 —Such din shall trouble them no more.
- 'These nether precincts do not lack 86
 Charms of their own;—then come with
 me,
 I want a comrade, and for you
 There's nothing that I would not do;
 Nought is there that you shall not see. 90
- 'Haste! and above Siberian snows
 We'll sport amid the boreal morning;
 Will mingle with her lustrous gliding
 Among the stars, the stars now hiding,
 And now the stars adorning. 95
- 'I know the secrets of a land
 Where human foot did never stray;
 Fair is that land as evening skies,
 And cool, though in the depth it lies
 Of burning Africa. 100
- 'Or we'll into the realm of Faery,
 Among the lovely shades of things;
 The shadowy forms of mountains bare,
 And streams, and bowers, and ladies fair,
 The shades of palaces and kings! 105
- 'Or, if you thirst with hardy zeal
 Less quiet regions to explore,
 Prompt voyage shall to you reveal
 How earth and heaven are taught to feel
 The might of magic lore! 110
- 'My little vagrant Form of light,
 My gay and beautiful Canoe,
 Well have you played your friendly part;
 As kindly take what from my heart
 Experience forces—then adieu! 115
- 'Temptation lurks among your words;
 But, while these pleasures you're pur-
 suing
 Without impediment or let,
 No wonder if you quite forget
 What on the earth is doing. 120
- 'There was a time when all mankind
 Did listen with a faith sincere
 To tuneful tongues in mystery versed;
 Then Poets fearlessly rehearsed
 The wonders of a wild career. 125
- 'Go—(but the world's a sleepy world,
 And 'tis, I fear, an age too late)
 Take with you some ambitious Youth!
 For, restless Wanderer! I, in truth,
 Am all unfit to be your mate. 130
- 'Long have I loved what I behold,
 The night that calms, the day that cheers;
 The common growth of mother-earth
 Suffices me—her tears, her mirth,
 Her humblest mirth and tears. 135
- 'The dragon's wing, the magic ring,
 I shall not covet for my dower,
 If I along that lowly way
 With sympathetic heart may stray,
 And with a soul of power. 140
- 'These given, what more need I desire
 To stir, to soothe, or elevate?
 What nobler marvels than the mind
 May in life's daily prospect find,
 May find or there create? 145
- 'A potent wand doth Sorrow wield;
 What spell so strong as guilty Fear!
 Repentance is a tender Sprite;
 If aught on earth have heavenly might,
 'Tis lodged within her silent tear. 150
- 'But grant my wishes,—let us now
 Descend from this ethereal height;
 Then take thy way, adventurous Skiff,
 More daring far than Hippogriff,
 And be thy own delight! 155
- 'To the stone-table in my garden,
 Loved haunt of many a summer hour,
 The Squire is come: his daughter Bess
 Beside him in the cool recess
 Sits blooming like a flower. 160

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

'With these are many more convened;
They know not I have been so far;—
I see them there, in number nine,
Beneath the spreading Weymouth-pine!
I see them—there they are!

165

'There sits the Vicar and his Dame;
And there my good friend, Stephen Otter;
And, ere the light of evening fail,
To them I must relate the Tale
Of Peter Bell the Potter.'

170

Off flew the Boat—away she flees,
Spurning her freight with indignation!
And I, as well as I was able,
On two poor legs, toward my stone-table
Limped on with sore vexation.

175

'O, here he is!' cried little Bess—
She saw me at the garden-door;
'We've waited anxiously and long,'
They cried, and all around me throng,
Full nine of them or more!

180

'Reproach me not—your fears be still—
Be thankful we again have met;—
Resume, my Friends! within the shade
Your seats, and quickly shall be paid
The well-remembered debt.'

185

I spake with faltering voice, like one
Not wholly rescued from the pale
Of a wild dream, or worse illusion;
But straight, to cover my confusion,
Began the promised Tale.

190

PART FIRST

ALL by the moonlight river-side
Groaned the poor Beast—alas! in vain;
The staff was raised to loftier height,
And the blows fell with heavier weight
As Peter struck—and struck again.

195

'Hold!' cried the Squire, 'against the
rules
Of common sense you're surely sinning;
This leap is for us all too bold;
Who Peter was, et that be told,
And start from the beginning.'

200

—'A Potter,¹ Sir, he was by trade,'
Said I, becoming quite collected;
'And wheresoever he appeared,
Full twenty times was Peter feared
For once that Peter was respected.'

205

He, two-and-thirty years or more
Had been a wild and woodland rover;
Had heard the Atlantic surges roar
On farthest Cornwall's rocky shore,
And trod the cliffs of Dover.

210

¹ In the dialect of the North, a hawker of earthenware is thus designated.

'And he had seen Caernarvon's towers,
And well he knew the spire of Sarum;
And he had been where Lincoln bell
Flings o'er the fen that ponderous knell—
A far-renowned alarum!

215

'At Doncaster, at York, and Leeds,
And merry Carlisle had he been;
And all along the Lowlands fair,
All through the bonny shire of Ayr;
And far as Aberdeen.

220

'And he had been at Inverness;
And Peter, by the mountain-rills,
Had danced his round with Highland
lasses;
And he had lain beside his asses
On lofty Cheviot Hills:

225

'And he had trudged through Yorkshire
dales,
Among the rocks and winding scars;
Where deep and low the hamlets lie
Beneath their little patch of sky
And little lot of stars:

230

'And all along the indented coast,
Bespattered with the salt-sea foam;
Where'er a knot of houses lay
On headland, or in hollow bay;—
Sure never man like him did roam!

235

'As well might Peter in the Fleet
Have been fast bound, a begging debtor;—
He travelled here, he travelled there;—
But not the value of a hair
Was heart or head the better.

240

'He roved among the vales and streams,
In the green wood and hollow dell;
They were his dwellings night and day,—
But nature ne'er could find the way
Into the heart of Peter Bell.

245

'In vain, through every changeful year,
Did Nature lead him as before;
A primrose by a river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more.

250

'Small change it made in Peter's heart
To see his gentle panniered train
With more than vernal pleasure feeding,
Where'er the tender grass was leading
Its earliest green along the lane.

255

'In vain, through water, earth, and air,
The soul of happy sound was spread,
When Peter on some April morn,
Beneath the broom or budding thorn,
Made the warm earth his lazy bed.

260

'At noon, when, by the forest's edge
He lay beneath the branches high,
The soft blue sky did never melt
Into his heart; he never felt
The witchery of the soft blue sky!

265

'On a fair prospect some have looked
And felt, as I have heard them say,
As if the moving time had been
A thing as steadfast as the scene
On which they gazed themselves away.

'Within the breast of Peter Bell
These silent raptures found no place;
He was a Carl as wild and rude
As ever hue-and-cry pursued,
As ever ran a felon's race.

'Of all that lead a lawless life,
Of all that love their lawless lives,
In city or in village small,
He was the wildest far of all;—
He had a dozen wedded wives.

'Nay, start not!—wedded wives—
twelve!

But how one wife could e'er come near
him,

In simple truth I cannot tell;
For, be it said of Peter Bell,
To see him was to fear him.

'Though Nature could not touch his heart
By lovely forms, and silent weather,
And tender sounds, yet you might see
At once that Peter Bell and she
Had often been together.

'A savage wildness round him hung
As of a dweller out of doors;
In his whole figure and his mien
A savage character was seen
Of mountains and of dreary moors.

'To all the unshaped half-human thoughts
Which solitary Nature feeds
'Mid summer storms or winter's ice,
Had Peter joined whatever vice
The cruel city breeds.

'His face was keen as is the wind
That cuts along the hawthorn-fence:
Of courage you saw little there,
But, in its stead, a medley air
Of cunning and of impudence.

'He had a dark and sidelong walk,
And long and slouching was his gait;
Beneath his looks so bare and bold,
You might perceive, his spirit cold
Was playing with some inward bait.

'His forehead wrinkled was and furred;
A work, one half of which was done
By thinking of his "whens" and "hows,"
And half, by knitting of his brows
Beneath the glaring sun.

'There was a hardness in his cheek,
There was a hardness in his eye,
As if the man had fixed his face,
In many a solitary place,
Against the wind and open sky!

ONE NIGHT, (and now, my little Bess!
We've reached at last the promised Tale;)
One beautiful November night,
When the full moon was shining bright
Upon the rapid river Swale,

Along the river's winding banks
Peter was travelling all alone;—
Whether to buy or sell, or led
By pleasure running in his head,
To me was never known.

He trudged along through copse and
brake
He trudged along o'er hill and dale;
Nor for the moon cared he a tittle,
And for the stars he cared as little,
And for the murmuring river Swale.

But, chancing to espy a path
That promised to cut short the way;
As many a wiser man hath done,
He left a trusty guide for one
That might his steps betray.

To a thick wood he soon is brought
Where cheerily his course he weaves,
And whistling loud may yet be heard,
Though often buried like a bird
Darkling, among the boughs and leaves.

But quickly Peter's mood is changed,
And on he drives with cheeks that burn
In downright fury and in wrath;—
There's little sign the treacherous path
Will to the road return!

The path grows dim, and dimmer still;
Now up, now down, the Rover wends,
With all the sail that he can carry,
Till brought to a deserted quarry—
And there the pathway ends.

He paused—for shadows of strange shape,
Massy and black, before him lay;
But through the dark, and through the
cold,
And through the yawning fissures old,
Did Peter boldly press his way

Right through the quarry;—and behold
A scene of soft and lovely hue!
Where blue and grey, and tender green,
Together make as sweet a scene
As ever human eye did view.

Beneath the clear blue sky he saw
A little field of meadow ground;
But field or meadow name it not;
Call it of earth a small green plot,
With rocks encompassed round.

The Swale flowed under the grey rocks,
But he flowed quiet and unseen;—
You need a strong and stormy gale
To bring the noises of the Swale
To that green spot, so calm and green!

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

- And is there no one dwelling here, 376
No hermit with his beads and glass?
And does no little cottage look
Upon this soft and fertile nook?
Does no one live near this green grass?
- Across the deep and quiet spot 381
Is Peter driving through the grass—
And now has reached the skirting trees;
When, turning round his head, he sees
A solitary Ass. 385
- 'A prize!' cries Peter—but he first
Must spy about him far and near:
There's not a single house in sight,
No woodman's hut, no cottage light—
Peter, you need not fear! 390
- There's nothing to be seen but woods,
And rocks that spread a hoary gleam,
And this one Beast, that from the bed
Of the green meadow hangs his head
Over the silent stream. 395
- His head is with a halter bound;
The halter seizing, Peter leapt
Upon the Creature's back, and plied
With ready heels his shaggy side;
But still the Ass his station kept. 400
- Then Peter gave a sudden jerk,
A jerk that from a dungeon-floor
Would have pulled up an iron ring;
But still the heavy-headed Thing
Stood just as he had stood before! 405
- Quoth Peter, leaping from his seat,
'There is some plot against me laid;
Once more the little meadow-ground
And all the hoary cliffs around
He cautiously surveyed. 410
- All, all is silent—rocks and woods,
All still and silent—far and near!
Only the Ass, with motion dull,
Upon the pivot of his skull
Turns round his long left ear. 415
- Thought Peter. What can mean all this?
Some ugly witchcraft must be here!
—Once more the Ass, with motion dull,
Upon the pivot of his skull
Turned round his long left ear. 420
- Suspicion ripened into dread;
Yet, with deliberate action slow,
His staff high-raising, in the pride
Of skill, upon the sounding hide
He dealt a sturdy blow. 425
- The poor Ass staggered with the shock;
And then, as if to take his ease,
In quiet uncomplaining mood,
Upon the spot where he had stood, 429
Dropped gently down upon his knees;
- As gently on his side he fell;
And by the river's brink did lie;
And, while he lay like one that mourned,
The patient Beast on Peter turned
His shining hazel eye. 435
- 'Twas but one mild, reproachful look,
A look more tender than severe;
And straight in sorrow, not in dread,
He turned the eye-ball in his head
Towards the smooth river deep and clear.
- Upon the Beast the sapling rings; 441
His lank sides heaved, his limbs they
stirred;
He gave a groan, and then another,
Of that which went before the brother,
And then he gave a third. 445
- All by the moonlight river side
He gave three miserable groans;
And not till now hath Peter seen
How gaunt the Creature is,—how lean
And sharp his staring bones! 450
- With legs stretched out and stiff he lay:—
No word of kind commiseration
Fell at the sight from Peter's tongue;
With hard contempt his heart was wrung,
With hatred and vexation. 455
- The meagre beast lay still as death;
And Peter's lips with fury quiver;
Quoth he, 'You little mulish dog,
I'll fling your carcass like a log
Head-foremost down the river!' 460
- An impious oath confirmed the threat—
Whereat from the earth on which he lay
To all the echoes, south and north,
And east and west, the Ass sent forth
A long and clamorous bray! 465
- This outcry, on the heart of Peter,
Seems like a note of joy to strike,—
Joy at the heart of Peter knocks;
But in the echo of the rocks
Was something Peter did not like. 470
- Whether to cheer his coward breast,
Or that he could not break the chain,
In this serene and solemn hour,
Twined round him by demoniac power,
To the blind work he turned again. 475
- Among the rocks and winding crags;
Among the mountains far away;
Once more the Ass did lengthen out
More ruefully a deep-drawn shout,
The hard dry see-saw of his horrible bray!
- What is there now in Peter's heart! 481
Or whence the might of this strange sound?
The moon uneasy looked and dimmer,
The broad blue heavens appeared to
glimmer, 484
And the rocks staggered all around—

From Peter's hand the sapling dropped!
Threat has he none to execute;
'If any one should come and see
That I am here, they'll think,' quoth he,
'I'm helping this poor dying brute.' 490

He scans the Ass from limb to limb,
And ventures now to uplift his eyes;
More steady looks the moon, and clear,
More like themselves the rocks appear
And touch more quiet skies. 495

His scorn returns—his hate revives;
He stoops the Ass's neck to seize
With malice—that again takes flight;
For in the pool a startling sight
Meets him, among the inverted trees. 500

Is it the moon's distorted face?
The ghost-like image of a cloud?
Is it a gallows there portrayed?
Is Peter of himself afraid?
Is it a coffin,—or a shroud? 505

A grisly idol hewn in stone?
Or imp from witch's lap let fall?
Perhaps a ring of shining fairies?
Such as pursue their feared vagaries
In sylvan bower, or haunted hall? 510

Is it a fiend that to a stake
Of fire his desperate self is tethering?
Or stubborn spirit doomed to yell
In solitary ward or cell,
Ten thousand miles from all his brethren? 516

Never did pulse so quickly throb,
And never heart so loudly panted;
He looks, he cannot choose but look;
Like some one reading in a book—
A book that is enchanted. 520

Ah, well—a-day for Peter Bell!
He will be turned to iron soon,
Meet Statue for the court of Fear!
His hat is up—and every hair
Bristles, and whitens in the moon! 525

He looks, he ponders, looks again;
He sees a motion—hears a groan;
His eyes will burst—his heart will break—
He gives a loud and frightful shriek,
And back he falls, as if his life were flown!

PART SECOND

We left our Hero in a trance,
Beneath the alders, near the river;
The Ass is by the river-side,
And, where the feeble breezes glide,
Upon the stream the moonbeams quiver. 531

A happy respite! but at length
He feels the glimmering of the moon;
Wakes with glazed eye, and feebly sigh-
ing—
To sink, perhaps, where he is lying,
Into a second swoon! 540

He lifts his head, he sees his staff;
He touches—'tis to him a treasure!
Faint recollection seems to tell
That he is yet where mortals dwell—
A thought received with languid pleasure!

His head upon his elbow propped, 546
Becoming less and less perplexed,
Sky-ward he looks—to rock and wood—
And then—upon the glassy flood
His wandering eye is fixed. 550

Thought he, that is the face of one
In his last sleep securely bound!
So toward the stream his head he bent,
And downward thrust his staff, intent
The river's depth to sound. 555

Now—like a tempest-shattered bark,
That overwhelmed and prostrate lies,
And in a moment to the verge
Is lifted of a foaming surge—
Full suddenly the Ass doth rise! 560

His staring bones all shake with joy,
And close by Peter's side he stands:
While Peter o'er the river bends,
The little Ass his neck extends,
And fondly licks his hands. 565

Such life is in the Ass's eyes,
Such life is in his limbs and ears;
That Peter Bell, if he had been
The veriest coward ever seen,
Must now have thrown aside his fears. 570

The Ass looks on—and to his work
Is Peter quietly resigned;
He touches here—he touches there—
And now among the dead man's hair
His sapling Peter has entwined. 575

He pulls—and looks—and pulls again;
And he whom the poor Ass had lost,
The man who had been four days dead,
Head-foremost from the river's bed
Uprises like a ghost! 580

And Peter draws him to dry land;
And through the brain of Peter pass
Some poignant twitches, fast and faster;
'No doubt,' quoth he, 'he is the Master
Of this poor miserable Ass!' 585

The meagre shadow that looks on—
What would he now? what is he doing?
His sudden fit of joy is flown,—
He on his knees hath laid him down,
As if he were his grief renewing; 590

But no—that Peter on his back
Must mount, he shows well as he can:
Thought Peter then, come weal or woe,
I'll do what he would have me do,
In pity to this poor drowned man. 595

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

With that resolve he boldly mounts
Upon the pleased and thankful Ass;
And then, without a moment's stay,
That earnest Creature turned away,
Leaving the body on the grass.

600

Intent upon his faithful watch,
The Beast four days and nights had past;
A sweeter meadow ne'er was seen,
And there the Ass four days had been,
Nor ever once did break his fast:

605

Yet firm his step, and stout his heart;
The mead is crossed—the quarry's mouth
Is reached; but there the trusty guide
Into a thicket turns aside,
And deftly ambles towards the south.

610

When hark a burst of doleful sound!
And Peter honestly might say,
The like came never to his ears,
Though he has been, full thirty years,
A rover—night and day!

615

'Tis not a plover of the moors,
'Tis not a bittern of the fen;
Nor can it be a barking fox,
Nor night-bird chambered in the rocks,
Nor wild-cat in a woody glen!

620

The Ass is startled—and stops short
Right in the middle of the thicket;
And Peter, wont to whistle loud
Whether alone or in a crowd,
Is silent as a silent cricket.

625

What ails you now, my little Bess?
Well may you tremble and look grave!
This cry—that rings along the wood,
This cry—that floats adown the flood,
Comes from the entrance of a cave:

630

I see a blooming Wood-boy there,
And if I had the power to say
How sorrowful the wanderer is,
Your heart would be as sad as his
Till you had kissed his tears away!

635

Grasping a hawthorn branch in hand,
All bright with berries ripe and red,
Into the cavern's mouth he peeps;
Thence back into the moonlight creeps;
Whom seeks he—whom?—the silent
dead:

640

His father!—Him doth he require—
Him hath he sought with fruitless pains,
Among the rocks, behind the trees;
Now creeping on his hands and knees,
Now running o'er the open plains.

645

And hither is he come at last,
When he through such a day has gone,
By this dark cave to be distressed
Like a poor bird—her plundered nest
Hovering around with dolorous moan!

Of that intense and piercing cry 651
The listening Ass conjectures well;
Wild as it is, he there can read
Some intermingled notes that plead
With touches irresistible. 655

But Peter—when he saw the Ass
Not only stop but turn, and change
The cherished tenor of his pace
That lamentable cry to chase—
It wrought in him conviction strange; 660

A faith that for the dead man's sake,
And this poor slave who loved him well,
Vengeance upon his head will fall,
Some visitation worse than all
Which ever till this night befell. 665

Meanwhile the Ass to reach his home
Is striving stoutly as he may;
But, while he climbs the woody hill,
The cry grows weak—and weaker still;
And now at last it dies away. 670

So with his freight the Creature turns
Into a gloomy grove of beech,
Along the shade with footsteps true
Descending slowly, till the two
The open moonlight reach. 675

And there, along the narrow dell,
A fair smooth pathway you discern,
A length of green and open road—
As if it from a fountain flowed—
Winding away between the fern. 680

The rocks that tower on either side
Build up a wild fantastic scene;
Temples like those among the Hindoos,
And mosques, and spires, and abbey-win-
dows,
And castles all with ivy green! 685

And while the Ass pursues his way
Along this solitary dell,
As pensively his steps advance,
The mosques and spires change counte-
nance,

And look at Peter Bell! 690

That unintelligible cry
Hath left him high in preparation,—
Convinced that he, or soon or late,
This very night will meet his fate—
And so he sits in expectation! 695

The strenuous Animal hath clomb
With the green path; and now he wends
Where, shining like the smoothest sea,
In undisturbed immensity
A level plain extends. 700

But whence this faintly-rustling sound
By which the journeying pair are chased?
—A withered leaf is close behind,
Light plaything for the sportive wind
Upon that solitary waste. 705

When Peter spied the moving thing,
It only doubled his distress;
'Where there is not a bush or tree,
The very leaves they follow me—
So huge hath been my wickedness!'

710

To a close lane they now are come,
Where, as before, the enduring Ass
Moves on without a moment's stop,
Nor once turns round his head to crop
A bramble-leaf or blade of grass.

715

Between the hedges as they go,
The white dust sleeps upon the lane;
And Peter, ever and anon
Back-looking, sees, upon a stone,
Or in the dust, a crimson stain.

720

A stain—as of a drop of blood
By moonlight made more faint and wan;
Ha! why these sinkings of despair?
He knows not how the blood comes
there—

And Peter is a wicked man.

725

At length he spies a bleeding wound,
Where he had struck the Ass's head;
He sees the blood, knows what it is,—
A glimpse of sudden joy was his,
But then it quickly fled;

730

Of him whom sudden death had seized
He thought,—of thee, O faithful Ass!
And once again those ghastly pains,
Shoot to and fro through heart and reins,
And through his brain like lightning
pass.

735

PART THIRD

I've heard of one, a gentle Soul,
Though given to sadness and to gloom,
And for the fact will vouch,—one night
It chanced that by a taper's light
This man was reading in his room;

740

Bending, as you or I might bend
At night o'er any pious book,
When sudden blackness overspread
The snow-white page on which he read,
And made the good man round him look.

The chamber walls were dark all round,—
And to his book he turned again;
—The light had left the lonely taper,
And formed itself upon the paper
Into large letters—bright and plain!

750

The godly book was in his hand—
And on the page, more black than coal,
Appeared, set forth in strange array,
A word—which to his dying day
Perplexed the good man's gentle soul.

755

The ghostly word, thus plainly seen,
Did never from his lips depart;
But he hath said, poor gentle wight!
It brought full many a sin to light
Out of the bottom of his heart.

760

Dread Spirits! to confound the meek
Why wander from your course so far,
Disordering colour, form, and stature!
—Let good men feel the soul of nature,
And see things as they are.

765

Yet, potent Spirits! well I know,
How ye, that play with soul and sense,
Are not unused to trouble friends
Of goodness, for most gracious ends—
And this I speak in reverence!

770

But might I give advice to you,
Whom in my fear I love so well;
From men of pensive virtue go,
Dread Beings! and your empire show
On hearts like that of Peter Bell.

775

Your presence often have I felt
In darkness and the stormy night;
And with like force, if need there be,
Ye can put forth your agency
When earth is calm, and heaven is bright.

779

Then coming from the wayward world,
That powerful world in which ye dwell,
Come, Spirits of the Mind! and try,
To-night, beneath the moonlight sky,
What may be done with Peter Bell!

785

—O, would that some more skilful voice
My further labour might prevent!
Kind Listeners, that around me sit,
I feel that I am all unfit
For such high argument.

790

I've played, I've danced, with my nar-
ration;

I loitered long ere I began:
Ye waited then on my good pleasure;
Pour out indulgence still, in measure
As liberal as ye can!

795

Our Travellers, ye remember well,
Are thridding a sequestered lane;
And Peter many tricks is trying,
And many anodynes applying,
To ease his conscience of its pain.

800

By this his heart is lighter far;
And, finding that he can account
So snugly for that crimson stain,
His evil spirit up again
Does like an empty bucket mount.

805

And Peter is a deep logician
Who hath no lack of wit mercurial;
'Blood drops—leaves rustle—yet,' quoth
he,

'This poor man never but for me
Could have had Christian burial.

810

'And, say the best you can, 'tis plain,
That here has been some wicked dealing;
No doubt the devil in me wrought;
I'm not the man who could have thought
An Ass like this was worth the steal-
ing!'

815

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

So from his pocket Peter takes
His shining horn tobacco-box;
And in a light and careless way,
As men who with their purpose play,
Upon the lid he knocks.

820 Over that dull and dreary sound. 875

Let them whose voice can stop the clouds,
Whose cunning eye can see the wind,
Tell to a curious world the cause
Why, making here a sudden pause,
The Ass turned round his head and
grinned.

825 For well did Peter know the sound;
The language of those drunken joys
To him, a jovial soul, I ween
But a few hours ago, had been
A gladsome and a welcome noise. 880

Appalling process! I have marked
The like on heath, in lonely wood;
And, verily, have seldom met
A spectacle more hideous—yet
It suited Peter's present mood.

830 By strong compunction and remorse. 885

And, grinning in his turn, his teeth
He in jocose defiance showed—
When, to upset his spiteful mirth,
A murmur, pent within the earth,
In the dead earth beneath the road,

835 But, more than all, his heart is stung
To think of one, almost a child;
A sweet and playful Highland girl,
As light and beauteous as a squirrel,
As beauteous and as wild! 890

Rolled audibly!—it swept along,
A muffled noise—a rumbling sound!—
'Twas by a troop of miners made,
Plying with gunpowder their trade,
Some twenty fathoms under ground.

840 Her dwelling was a lonely house,
A cottage in a heathy dell;
And she put on her gown of green,
And left her mother at sixteen,
And followed Peter Bell. 895

Small cause of dire effect! for, surely,
If ever mortal, King or Cotter,
Believed that earth was charged to quake
And yawn for his unworthy sake,
'Twas Peter Bell the Potter.

845 To kirk she had been used to go,
Twice every Sabbath-day. 900

But as an oak in breathless air
Will stand though to the centre hewn;
Or as the weakest things, if frost
Have stiffened them, maintain their post;
So he, beneath the gazing moon!—

850 And, when she followed Peter Bell,
It was to lead an honest life;
For he, with tongue not used to falter,
Had pledged his troth before the altar
To love her as his wedded wife. 905

The Beast bestriding thus, he reached
A spot where, in a sheltering cove,
A little chapel stands alone,
With greenest ivy overgrown,
And tufted with an ivy grove;

855 A mother's hope is hers;—but soon
She drooped and pined like one forlorn;
From Scripture she a name did borrow;
Benoni, or the child of sorrow,
She called her babe unborn. 910

Dying insensibly away
From human thoughts and purposes,
It seemed—wall, window, roof and
tower—

915 For she had learned how Peter lived,
And took it in most grievous part;
She to the very bone was worn,
And, ere that little child was born,
Died of a broken heart.

To bow to some transforming power,
And blend with the surrounding trees.

860 And now the Spirits of the Mind
Are busy with poor Peter Bell;
Upon the rights of visual sense
Usurping, with a prevalence
More terrible than magic spell. 920

As ruinous a place it was,
Thought Peter, in the shire of Fife
That served my turn, when following still
From land to land a reckless will
I married my sixth wife!

865 Close by a brake of flowering furze
(Above it shivering aspens play)
He sees an unsubstantial creature,
His very self in form and feature,
Not four yards from the broad highway: 924

The unheeding Ass moves slowly on,
And now is passing by an inn
Brim-full of a carousing crew,
That make, with curses not a few,
An uproar and a drunken din.

870 Not four yards from the broad highway:

And stretched beneath the furze he sees
The Highland girl—it is no other;
And hears her crying as she cried,
The very moment that she died,
'My mother! oh my mother!' 930

The sweat pours down from Peter's face,
So grievous is his heart's contrition;
With agony his eye-balls ache
While he beholds by the furze-brake
This miserable vision! 935

Calm is the well-deserving brute,
His peace hath no offence betrayed;
But now, while down that slope he wends,
A voice to Peter's ear ascends,
Resounding from the woody glade: 940

The voice, though clamorous as a horn
Re-echoed by a naked rock,
Comes from that tabernacle—List!
Within, a fervent Methodist
Is preaching to no heedless flock! 945

'Repent! repent!' he cries aloud,
'While yet ye may find mercy;—strive
To love the Lord with all your might;
Turn to him, seek him day and night,
And save your souls alive! 950

'Repent! repent! though ye have gone,
Through paths of wickedness and woe,
After the Babylonian harlot;
And though your sins be red as scarlet,
They shall be white as snow!' 955

Even as he passed the door, these words
Did plainly come to Peter's ears;
And they such joyful tidings were,
The joy was more than he could bear!—
He melted into tears. 960

Sweet tears of hope and tenderness!
And fast they fell, a plentiful shower!
His nerves, his sinews seemed to melt;
Through all his iron frame was felt
A gentle, a relaxing, power! 965

Each fibre of his frame was weak;
Weak all the animal within;
But, in its helplessness, grew mild
And gentle as an infant child,
An infant that has known no sin. 970

'Tis said, meek Beast! that, through Heaven's grace,
He not unmoved did notice now
The cross upon thy shoulder scored,
For lasting impress, by the Lord
To whom all human-kind shall bow; 975

Memorial of his touch—that day
When Jesus humbly deigned to ride,
Entering the proud Jerusalem,
By an immeasurable stream
Of shouting people deified! 980

Meanwhile the persevering Ass
Turned towards a gate that hung in view
Across a shady lane; his chest
Against the yielding gate he pressed
And quietly passed through. 985

And up the stony lane he goes;
No ghost more softly ever trod;
Among the stones and pebbles he
Sets down his hoofs inaudibly,
As if with felt his hoofs were shod. 990

Along the lane the trusty Ass
Went twice two hundred yards or more,
And no one could have guessed his aim,—
Till to a lonely house he came,
And stopped beside the door. 995

Thought Peter, 'tis the poor man's home!
He listens—not a sound is heard
Save from the trickling household rill;
But, stepping o'er the cottage-sill,
Forthwith a little Girl appeared. 1000

She to the Meeting-house was bound
In hopes some tidings there to gather:
No glimpse it is, no doubtful gleam;
She saw—and uttered with a scream,
'My father! here's my father!' 1005

The very word was plainly heard,
Heard plainly by the wretched Mother—
Her joy was like a deep affright:
And forth she rushed into the light,
And saw it was another! 1010

And instantly upon the earth,
Beneath the full moon shining bright,
Close to the Ass's feet she fell;
At the same moment Peter Bell
Dismounts in most unhappy plight. 1015

As he beheld the Woman lie
Breathless and motionless, the mind
Of Peter sadly was confused;
But, though to such demands unused,
And helpless almost as the blind, 1020

He raised her up; and while he held
Her body propped against his knee,
The Woman waked—and when she spied
The poor Ass standing by her side,
She moaned most bitterly. 1025

'Oh! God be praised—my heart's at ease—
For he is dead—I know it well!'
—At this she wept a bitter flood;
And, in the best way that he could,
His tale did Peter tell. 1030

He trembles—he is pale as death;
His voice is weak with perturbation;
He turns aside his head, he pauses;
Poor Peter from a thousand causes
Is crippled sore in his narration. 1035

POEMS OF THE IMAGINATION

At length she learned how he espied
The Ass in that small meadow-ground;
And that her Husband now lay dead,
Beside that luckless river's bed
In which he had been drowned. 1040

A piercing look the Widow cast
Upon the Beast that near her stands;
She sees 'tis he, that 'tis the same;
She calls the poor Ass by his name,
And wrings, and wrings her hands. 1045

'O wretched loss—untimely stroke!
If he had died upon his bed!
He knew not one forewarning pain;
He never will come home again—
Is dead, for ever dead!' 1050

Beside the Woman Peter stands;
His heart is opening more and more;
A holy sense pervades his mind;
He feels what he for human-kind
Has never felt before. 1055

At length, by Peter's arm sustained,
The Woman rises from the ground—
'Oh, mercy! something must be done,
My little Rachel, you must run,—
Some willing neighbour must be found.

'Make haste—my little Rachel—do, 1061
The first you meet with—bid him come,
Ask him to lend his horse to-night,
And this good Man whom Heaven requite,
Will help to bring the body home.' 1065

Away goes Rachel weeping loud;—
An Infant, waked by her distress,
Makes in the house a piteous cry;
And Peter hears the Mother sigh,
'Seven are they, and all fatherless!' 1070

And now is Peter taught to feel
That man's heart is a holy thing;
And Nature, through a world of death,
Breathes into him a second breath,
More searching than the breath of spring.

Upon a stone the Woman sits 1076
In agony of silent grief—
From his own thoughts did Peter start;
He longs to press her to his heart,
From love that cannot find relief. 1080

But roused, as if through every limb
Had past a sudden shock of dread,
The Mother o'er the threshold flies,
And up the cottage stairs she hies,
And on the pillow lays her burning
head. 1085

And Peter turns his steps aside
Into a shade of darksome trees,
Where he sits down, he knows not how,
With his hands pressed against his brow,
His elbows on his tremulous knees. 1090

There, self-involved, does Peter sit
Until no sign of life he makes,
As if his mind were sinking deep
Through years that have been long asleep!
The trance is passed away—he wakes;

He lifts his head—and sees the Ass 1096
Yet standing in the clear moonshine;
'When shall I be as good as thou?
Oh! would, poor beast, that I had now
A heart but half as good as thine!' 1100

But *He*—who deviously hath sought
His Father through the lonesome woods,
Hath sought, proclaiming to the ear
Of night his grief and sorrowful fear—
He comes, escaped from fields and
floods;— 1105

With weary pace is drawing nigh;
He sees the Ass—and nothing living
Had ever such a fit of joy
As hath this little orphan Boy,
For he has no misgiving! 1110

Forth to the gentle Ass he springs,
And up about his neck he climbs;
In loving words he talks to him,
He kisses, kisses face and limb,—
He kisses him a thousand times! 1115

This Peter sees, while in the shade
He stood beside the cottage-door;
And Peter Bell, the ruffian wild,
Sobs loud, he sobs even like a child,
'Oh! God, I can endure no more!' 1120

—Here ends my Tale: for in a trice
Arrived a neighbour with his horse;
Peter went forth with him straightway;
And, with due care, ere break of day,
Together they brought back the Corse.

And many years did this poor Ass, 1126
Whom once it was my luck to see
Cropping the shrubs of Leming-Lane,
Help by his labour to maintain
The Widow and her family. 1130

And Peter Bell, who, till that night,
Had been the wildest of his clan,
Forsook his crimes, renounced his folly,
And, after ten months' melancholy,
Became a good and honest man. 1135

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

DEDICATION

TO —

[Composed 1826 (?).—Published 1827.]

HAPPY the feeling from the bosom thrown
In perfect shape (whose beauty Time shall spare
Though a breath made it) like a bubble blown
For summer pastime into wanton air;
Happy the thought best likened to a stone
Of the sea-beach, when, polished with nice care,
Veins it discovers exquisite and rare,
Which for the loss of that moist gleam atone
That tempted first to gather it. That here,
O chief of Friends! such feelings I present
To thy regard, with thoughts so fortunate,
Were a vain notion; but the hope is dear
That thou, if not with partial joy elate,
Wilt smile upon this gift with more than mild content!

PART I

I

[Composed (?).—Published 1807.]

NUNS fret not at their convent's narrow
room;
And hermits are contented with their
cells;
And students with their pensive citadels;
Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his
loom,
Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar for
bloom,
High as the highest Peak of Furness-fells,
Will murmur by the hour in foxglove
bells:
In truth the prison, unto which we doom
Ourselves, no prison is: and hence for me,
In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be
bound
Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground;
Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs
must be)
Who have felt the weight of too much
liberty,
Should find brief solace there, as I have
found.

II

ADMONITION

Intended more particularly for the perusal of those
who may have happened to be enamoured of
some beautiful place of Retreat, in the Country
of the Lakes.

[Composed (?).—Published 1807.]

WELL may'st thou halt—and gaze with
brightening eye!
The lovely Cottage in the guardian nook
Hath stirred thee deeply; with its own
dear brook,

Its own small pasture, almost its own sky!
But covet not the Abode;—forbear to
sigh,
As many do, repining while they look;
Intruders—who would tear from Nature's
book

This precious leaf, with harsh impiety.
Think what the Home must be if it were
thine,
Even thine, though few thy wants!—Roof,
window, door,
The very flowers are sacred to the Poor,
The roses to the porch which they entwine:
Yea, all, that now enchants thee, from the
day
On which it should be touched, would
melt away.

III

[Composed (?).—Published 1807.]

'BELOVED Vale!' I said, 'when I shall con
Those many records of my childish years,
Remembrance of myself and of my peers
Will press me down: to think of what is
gone
Will be an awful thought, if life have one.'
But, when into the Vale I came, no fears
Distressed me; from mine eyes escaped no
tears;
Deep thought, or dread remembrance, had
I none.
By doubts and thousand petty fancies crost
I stood, of simple shame the blushing
Thrall;
So narrow seemed the brooks, the fields
so small!
A Juggler's balls old Time about him
tossed;
I looked, I stared, I smiled, I laughed; and
all
The weight of sadness was in wonder lost.

IV

AT APPLETHWAITE, NEAR KESWICK

[Composed 1804.—Published 1842.]

BEAUMONT! it was thy wish that I should
rear
A seemingly Cottage in this sunny Dell,
On favoured ground, thy gift, where I
might dwell
In neighbourhood with One to me most
dear,
That undivided we from year to year
Might work in our high Calling—a bright
hope
To which our fancies, mingling, gave free
scope
Till checked by some necessities severe.

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

And should these slacken, honoured
 BEAUMONT! still
 Even then we may perhaps in vain implore
 Leave of our fate thy wishes to fulfil. 11
 Whether this boon be granted us or not,
 Old Skiddaw will look down upon the Spot
 With pride, the Muses love it evermore.

V

[Composed 1801.—Published 1815.]

PELION and Ossa flourish side by side,
 Together in immortal books enrolled;
 His ancient dower Olympus hath not sold;
 And that inspiring Hill, which 'did divide
 Into two ample horns his forehead wide,'
 Shines with poetic radiance as of old; 6
 While not an English Mountain we behold
 By the celestial Muses glorified.
 Yet round our sea-girt shore they rise in
 crowds:

What was the great Parnassus' self to
 Thee, 10
 Mount Skiddaw? In his natural sove-
 reignty
 Our British Hill is nobler far; he shrouds
 His double front among Atlantic clouds,
 And pours forth streams more sweet than
 Castaly.

VI

[Composed 1801.—Published 1820.]

THERE is a little unpretending Rill
 Of limpid water, humbler far than aught
 That ever among Men or Naiads sought
 Notice or name!—It quivers down the hill,
 Furrowing its shallow way with dubious
 will; 5
 Yet to my mind this scanty Stream is
 brought
 Oftener than Ganges or the Nile; a
 thought
 Of private recollection sweet and still!
 Months perish with their moons; year
 treads on year;
 But, faithful Emma! thou with me canst
 say 10
 That, while ten thousand pleasures dis-
 appear,
 And flies their memory fast almost as they;
 The immortal Spirit of one happy day
 Lingers beside that Rill, in vision clear.

VII

[Composed (?).—Published 1827.]

HER only pilot the soft breeze, the boat
 Lingers, but Fancy is well satisfied;
 With keen-eyed Hope, with Memory, at
 her side,
 And the glad Muse at liberty to note
 All that to each is precious, as we float 5
 Gently along; regardless who shall chide
 If the heavens smile, and leave us free to
 glide,

Happy Associates breathing air remote
 From trivial cares. But, Fancy and the
 Muse,
 Why have I crowded this small bark with
 you 10
 And others of your kind, ideal crew!
 While here sits One whose brightness
 owes its hues
 To flesh and blood; no Goddess from
 above,
 No fleeting Spirit, but my own true Love?

VIII

[Composed (?).—Published 1815.]

THE fairest, brightest, hues of ether fade;
 The sweetest notes must terminate and die;
 O Friend! thy flute has breathed a har-
 mony
 Softly resounded through this rocky glade;
 Such strains of rapture as' the Genius
 played 5
 In his still haunt on Bagdad's summit
 high;
 He who stood visible to Mirza's eye,
 Never before to human sight betrayed.
 Lo, in the vale, the mists of evening spread!
 The visionary Arches are not there, 10
 Nor the green Islands, nor the shining
 Seas;
 Yet sacred is to me this Mountain's head,
 Whence I have risen, uplifted on the breeze
 Of harmony, above all earthly cars.

IX

UPON THE SIGHT OF A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE,
 Painted by Sir G. H. Beaumont, Bart.

[Composed August, 1811.—Published 1815.]

PAISED be the Art whose subtle power
 could stay
 Yon cloud, and fix it in that glorious shape;
 Nor would permit the thin smoke to
 escape,
 Nor those bright sunbeams to forsake the
 day;
 Which stopped that band of travellers on
 their way, 5
 Ere they were lost within the shady wood;
 And showed the Bark upon the glassy
 flood
 For ever anchored in her sheltering bay.
 Soul-soothing Art! whom Morning,
 Noontide, Even,
 Do serve with all their changeable
 pageantry; 10
 Thou, with ambition modest yet sublime,
 Here, for the sight of mortal man, hast
 given
 To one brief moment caught from fleeting
 time
 The appropriate calm of blest eternity.

¹ See the 'Vision of Mirza' in the 'Spectator.'

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

X

[Composed (?).—Published 1827.]

'Why, Minstrel, these untuneful murmur-
ings—
Dull, flagging notes that with each other
jar?'
'Think, gentle Lady, of a Harp so far
From its own country, and forgive the
strings.'
A simple answer! but even so forth springs,
From the Castalian fountain of the heart,
The Poetry of Life, and all that Art
Divine of words quickening insensate
things.
From the submissive necks of guiltless
men
Stretched on the block the glittering axe
recoils;
Sun, moon, and stars, all struggle in the
toils
Of mortal sympathy; what wonder then
That the poor Harp distempered music
yields
To its sad Lord, far from his native fields?

XI

[Composed (?).—Published 1819.1]

AERIAL Rock—whose solitary brow
From this low threshold daily meets my
sight;
When I step forth to hail the morning
light;
Or quit the stars with a lingering fare-
well—how
Shall Fancy pay to thee a grateful vow?
How, with the Muse's aid, her love attest?
—By planting on thy naked head the crest
Of an imperial Castle, which the plough
Of ruin shall not touch. Innocent scheme!
That doth presume no more than to sup-
ply
A grace the sinuous vale and roaring
stream
Want, through neglect of hoar Antiquity.
Rise, then, ye votive Towers! and catch a
gleam
Of golden sunset, ere it fade and die.

XII

TO SLEEP

[Composed (?).—Published 1807.]

O GENTLE Sleep! do they belong to thee,
These twinklings of oblivion? Thou dost
love
To sit in meekness, like the brooding
Dove,

¹ This, and eleven other Sonnets here marked simply '1819', appeared in the vol. containing *The Waggoner*, which was published in the summer of 1819 shortly after *Peter Bell*.—ED.

A captive never wishing to be free.
This tiresome night, O Sleep! thou art
to me
A Fly, that up and down himself doth
shove
Upon a fretful rivulet, now above,
Now on the water vexed with mockery.
I have no pain that calls for patience, no;
Hence am I cross and peevish as a child:
Am pleased by fits to have thee for my foe,
Yet ever willing to be reconciled:
O gentle Creature! do not use me so,
But once and deeply let me be beguiled.

XIII

TO SLEEP

[Composed (?).—Published 1807.]

FOND words have oft been spoken to thee,
Sleep!
And thou hast had thy store of tenderest
names;
The very sweetest Fancy culls or frames,
When thankfulness of heart is strong and
deep!
Dear Bosom-child we call thee, that dost
steep
In rich reward all suffering; Balm that
tames
All anguish; Saint that evil thoughts and
aims
Takest away, and into souls dost creep,
Like to a breeze from heaven. Shall I
alone,
I surely not a man ungently made,
Call thee worst Tyrant by which Flesh is
crost?
Perverse, self-willed to own and to disown,
Mere slave of them who never for thee
prayed,
Still last to come where thou art wanted
most!

XIV

TO SLEEP

[Composed (?).—Published 1807.]

A FLOCK of sheep that leisurely pass by,
One after one; the sound of rain, and bees
Murmuring; the fall of rivers, winds and
seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and
pure sky;
I have thought of all by turns, and yet
do lie
Sleepless! and soon the small birds'
melodies
Must hear, first uttered from my orchard
trees;
And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.
Even thus last night, and two nights more,
I lay
And could not win thee, Sleep! by any
stealth:

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

So do not let me wear to-night away:
Without Thee what is all the morning's
wealth?
Come, blessed barrier between day and
day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous
health!

XV

THE WILD DUCK'S NEST

[Composed (?).—Published 1819.]

THE imperial Consort of the Fairy-king
Owns not a sylvan bower; or gorgeous cell
With emerald floored, and with purpleal
shell
Ceilinged and roofed; that is so fair a thing
As this low structure, for the tasks of
Spring
Prepared by one who loves the buoyant
swell
Of the brisk waves, yet here consents to
dwell;
And spreads in steadfast peace her brood-
ing wing.
Words cannot paint the oer-shadowing
yew-tree bough,
And dimly-gleaming Nest,—a hollow
crown
Of golden leaves inlaid with silver down,
Fine as the mother's softest plumes allow:
I gazed—and, self-accused while gazing,
sighed
For human-kind, weak slaves of cumbrous
pride!

XVI

WRITTEN UPON A BLANK LEAF IN 'THE COMPLETE ANGLER'

[Composed (?).—Published 1819.]

WITHE flowing rivers yield a blameless
sport,
Shall live the name of Walton: Sage
benign!
Whose pen, the mysteries of the rod and
line
Unfolding, did not fruitlessly exhort
To reverend watching of each still report
That Nature utters from her rural shrine.
Meek, nobly versed in simple discipline—
He found the longest summer day too
short,
To his loved pastime given by sedgy Lee,
Or down the tempting maze of Shawford
brook—
Fairer than life itself, in this sweet Book,
The cowlip-bank and shady willow-tree;
And the fresh meads—where flowed, from
every nook
Of his full bosom, gladsome Piety!

XVII

TO THE POET, JOHN DYER

[Composed 1811.—Published 1820.]

BARD of the Fleece, whose skilful genius
made
That work a living landscape fair and
bright;
Nor hallowed less with musical delight
Than those soft scenes through which thy
childhood strayed,
Those southern tracts of Cambria, 'deep
embayed,
With green hills fenced, with ocean's mur-
mur lulled;
Though hasty Fame hath many a chaplet
culled
For worthless brows, while in the pensive
shade
Of cold neglect she leaves thy head un-
graced,
Yet pure and powerful minds, hearts
meek and still,
A grateful few, shall love thy modest Lay,
Long as the shepherd's bleating flock
shall stray
O'er naked Snowdon's wide aerial waste;
Long as the thrush shall pipe on Grongar
Hill!

XVIII

ON THE DETRACTION WHICH FOLLOWED THE PUBLICATION OF A CERTAIN POEM

[Composed 1820.—Published 1820.]

See Milton's Sonnet, beginning, 'A Book was
writ of late called "Tetrachordon."'

A BOOK came forth of late, called PETER
BELL;
Not negligent the style;—the matter?—
good
As aught that song records of Robin
Hood;
Or Roy, renowned through many a Scot-
tish dell;
But some (who brook those hackneyed
themes full well,
Nor heat, at Tam o' Shanter's name, their
blood)
Waxed wroth, and with foul claws, a
harpy brood,
On Bard and Hero clamorously fell.
Heed not, wild Rover once through heath
and glen,
Who mad'st at length the better life thy
choice,
Heed not such onset! nay, if praise of men
To thee appear not an unmeaning voice,
Lift up that grey-haired forehead and
rejoice
In the just tribute of thy Poet's pen!

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

XIX

[Composed (?).—Published 1819.]

GRIEF, thou hast lost an ever-ready friend
Now that the cottage Spinning-wheel is
mute;
And Care—a comforter that best could
suit
Her froward mood, and softest reprehend;
And Love—a charmer's voice, that used
to lend,
More efficaciously than aught that flows
From harp or lute, kind influence to compose
The throbbing pulse—else troubled without
end:
Even Joy could tell, Joy craving truce and
rest
From her own overflow, what power
sedate
On those revolving motions did await
Assiduously—to soothe her aching breast;
And, to a point of just relief, abate
The mantling triumphs of a day too blest.

XX

TO S. H.

[Composed (?).—Published 1827.]

EXCUSE is needless when with love sincere
Of occupation, not by fashion led,
Thou turn'st the Wheel that slept with
dust o'erspread;
My nerves from no such murmur shrink,—
tho' near,
Soft as the Dorhawk's to a distant ear,
When twilight shades darken the mountain's
head.
Even She who toils to spin our vital thread
Might smile on work, O Lady, once so
dear
To household virtues. Venerable Art,
Torn from the Poor! yet shall kind Heaven
protect
Its own; though Rulers, with undue
respect,
Trusting to crowded factory and mart
And proud discoveries of the intellect,
Heed not the pillage of man's ancient
heart.

XXI

COMPOSED IN ONE OF THE VALLEYS OF
WESTMORELAND, ON EASTER SUNDAY

[Composed (?).—Published 1819.]

WITH each recurrence of this glorious
morn
That saw the Saviour in his human frame
Rise from the dead, erewhile the Cottage-
dame

Put on fresh raiment—till that hour un-
worn:
Domestic hands the home-bred wool had
shorn,
And she who span it culled the daintiest
fleece,
In thoughtful reverence to the Prince of
Peace,
Whose temples bled beneath the platted
thorn.
A blest estate when piety sublime
These humble props disdained not! O
green dales!
Sad may I be who heard your sabbath
chime
When Art's abused inventions were un-
known;
Kind Nature's various wealth was all
your own;
And benefits were weighed in Reason's
scales!

XXII

DECAY OF PIETY

[Composed (?).—Published 1827.]

OFT have I seen, ere Time had ploughed
my cheek,
Matrons and Sires—who, punctual to the
call
Of their loved Church, on fast or festival
Through the long year the House of
Prayer would seek:
By Christmas snows, by visitation bleak
Of Easter winds, unscared from hut or
hall
They came to lowly bench or sculptured
stall,
But with one fervour of devotion meek.
I see the places where they once were
known,
And ask, surrounded even by kneeling
crowds,
Is ancient Piety for ever flown?
Alas! even then they seemed like fleecy
clouds
That, struggling through the western sky,
have won
Their pensive light from a departed sun!

XXIII

COMPOSED ON THE EVE OF THE MARRIAGE
OF A FRIEND¹ IN THE VALE OF GRASMERE,
1812

[Composed 1812.—Published 1815.]

WHAT need of clamorous bells, or ribands
gay,
These humble nuptials to proclaim or
grace?
Angels of love, look down upon the place;

¹ The poet's wife's brother, Thomas Hutchinson, who married Mary Monkhouse, November 1, 1812.
—Ed.

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

Shalt on the chosen vale a sun-bright day!
Yet no proud gladness would the Bride
display
Even for such promise:—serious is her
face,
Modest her mien; and she, whose thoughts
keep pace
With gentleness, in that becoming way
Will thank you. Faultless does the Maid
appear;
No disproportion in her soul, no strife:
But, when the closer view of wedded life
Hath shown that nothing human can
be clear
From frailty, for that insight may the Wife
To her indulgent Lord become more dear.

XXIV

FROM THE ITALIAN OF MICHAEL ANGELO

I

[Composed 1805.—Published 1807.]

Yes! hope may with my strong desire keep
pace,
And I be undeluded, unbetrayed;
For if of our affections none finds grace
In sight of Heaven, then, wherefore hath
God made
The world which we inhabit? Better plea
Love cannot have than that in loving thee
Glory to that eternal Peace is paid,
Who such divinity to thee imparts
As hallows and makes pure all gentle
hearts.
His hope is treacherous only whose love
dies
With beauty, which is varying every hour;
But in chaste hearts, uninfluenced by the
power
Of outward change, there blooms a death-
less flower,
That breathes on earth the air of paradise.

XXV

FROM THE SAME

II

[Composed probably 1805.—Published 1807.]

No mortal object did these eyes behold
When first they met the placid light of
thine,
And my Soul felt her destiny divine,
And hope of endless peace in me grew
bold:
Heaven-born, the Soul a heavenward
course must hold;
Beyond the visible world she soars to seek
(For what delights the sense is false and
weak)
Ideal Form, the universal mould.
The wise man, I affirm, can find no rest
In that which perishes: nor will he lend

His heart to aught which doth on time
depend.
Tis sense, unbridled will, and not true
love,
That kills the soul: love betters what is
best,
Even here below, but more in heaven
above.

XXVI

FROM THE SAME, TO THE SUPREME BEING

III

[Composed 1805.—Published 1807.]

THE prayers I make will then be sweet
indeed
If Thou the spirit give by which I pray:
My unassisted heart is barren clay,
That of its native self can nothing feed:
Of good and pious works Thou art the
seed,
That quickens only where Thou say'st it
may:
Unless Thou show to us thine own true
way
No man can find it: Father! Thou must
lead.
Do Thou, then, breathe those thoughts
into my mind
By which such virtue may in me be bred
That in thy holy footsteps I may tread;
The fetters of my tongue do Thou unbind,
That I may have the power to sing of Thee,
And sound thy praises everlastingly.

XXVII

[Composed later than June, 1812.—Published 1815.]

SURPRISED by joy—impatient as the Wind
I turned to share the transport—Oh! with
whom
But Thee,¹ deep buried in the silent tomb,
That spot which no vicissitude can find?
Love, faithful love, recalled thee to my
mind—
But how could I forget thee? Through
what power,
Even for the least division of an hour,
Have I been so beguiled as to be blind
To my most grievous loss!—That thought's
return
Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore,
Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,
Knowing my heart's best treasure was no
more;
That neither present time, nor years un-
born
Could to my sight that heavenly face
restore.

¹ Catherine, the poet's second daughter, born September 6, 1808, died June 5, 1812. See the poem, *Characteristics of a Child Three Years Old*, page 63.
—ED.

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

XXVIII

I

[Composed (?).—Published 1807.]

METHOUGHT I saw the footsteps of a
 throne
 Which mists and vapours from mine eyes
 did shroud—
 Nor view of who might sit thereon al-
 lowed;
 But all the steps and ground about were
 strown
 With sights the ruefullest that flesh and
 bone⁵
 Ever put on; a miserable crowd,
 Sick, hale, old, young, who cried before
 that cloud,
 'Thou art our king, O Death! to thee we
 groan.'
 Those steps I clomb; the mists before me
 gave
 Smooth way; and I beheld the face of one
 Sleeping alone within a mossy cave,¹¹
 With her face up to heaven; that seemed
 to have
 Pleasing remembrance of a thought fore-
 gone;
 A lovely Beauty in a summer grave!

XXIX

NOVEMBER, 1836

II

[Composed November, 1836.—Published 1837.]

EVEN so for me a Vision sanctified
 The sway of Death; long ere mine eyes
 had seen
 Thy countenance—the still rapture of thy
 mien—
 When thou, dear Sister! wert become
 Death's Bride:
 No trace of pain or languor could abide
 That change:—age on thy brow was
 smoothed—thy cold⁶
 Wan cheek at once was privileged to
 unfold
 A loveliness to living youth denied.
 Oh! if within me hope should e'er decline,
 The lamp of faith, lost Friend! too faintly
 burn;¹⁰
 Then may that heaven-revealing smile of
 thine,
 The bright assurance, visibly return:
 And let my spirit in that power divine
 Rejoice, as, through that power, it ceased
 to mourn.

XXX

[Composed August, 1802.—Published 1807.]

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
 The holy time is quiet as a Nun
 Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
 Is sinking down in its tranquillity;

The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the
 Sea;⁵

Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
 And doth with his eternal motion make
 A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
 Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with
 me here,
 If thou appear untouched by solemn
 thought,¹⁰
 Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
 Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the
 year;
 And worshipp'st at the Temple's inner
 shrine,
 God being with thee when we know it not.

XXXI

[Composed (?).—Published 1807.]

WHERE lies the Land to which yon Ship
 must go?
 Fresh as a lark mounting at break of day,
 Festively she puts forth in trim array;
 Is she for tropic suns, or polar snow?
 What boots the enquiry?—Neither friend
 nor foe⁵
 She cares for; let her travel where she
 may,
 She finds familiar names, a beaten way
 Ever before her, and a wind to blow.
 Yet still I ask, what haven is her mark?
 And, almost as it was when ships were
 rare¹⁰
 (From time to time, like Pilgrims, here
 and there
 Crossing the waters) doubt, and some-
 thing dark,
 Of the old Sea some reverential fear,
 Is with me at thy farewell, joyous Bark!

XXXII

[Composed (?).—Published 1807.]

WITH Ships the sea was sprinkled far and
 nigh,
 Like stars in heaven, and joyously it
 showed;
 Some lying fast at anchor in the road,
 Some veering up and down, one knew not
 why.
 A goodly Vessel did I then espy⁵
 Come like a giant from a haven broad;
 And lustily along the bay she strode,
 Her tackling rich, and of apparel high.
 This Ship was nought to me, nor I to her,
 Yet I pursued her with a Lover's look;¹⁰
 This Ship to all the rest did I prefer:
 When will she turn, and whither? She
 will brook
 No tarrying; where She comes the winds
 must stir:
 On went She, and due north her journey
 took.

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

XXXIII

[Composed (?).—Published 1807.]

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be

A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn; 10
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

XXXIV

[Composed (?).—Published 1823 (Joanna Baillie's *Poetic Miscellanies*); ed. 1827.]

A VOLANT Tribe of Bards on earth are found,
Who, while the flattering Zephyrs round them play,
On 'coigns of vantage' hang their nests of clay;
How quickly from that airy hold unbound,
Dust for oblivion! To the solid ground 5
Of nature trusts the Mind that builds for aye;
Convinced that there, there only, she can lay
Secure foundations. As the year runs round,
Apart she toils within the chosen ring;
While the stars shine, or while day's purple eye 10
Is gently closing with the flowers of spring;
Where even the motion of an Angel's wing
Would interrupt the intense tranquillity
Of silent hills, and more than silent sky.

XXXV

[Composed probably 1815.—Published 1815.]

'WEAK is the will of Man, his judgment blind;
Remembrance persecutes, and Hope betrays;
Heavy is woe;—and joy, for human-kind,
A mournful thing, so transient is the blaze!' 4

Thus might he paint our lot of mortal days
Who wants the glorious faculty assigned
To elevate the more-than-reasoning Mind,
And colour life's dark cloud with orient rays.

Imagination is that sacred power,
Imagination lofty and refined: 10
'Tis hers to pluck the amaranthine flower
Of Faith, and round the sufferer's temples bind
Wreaths that endure affliction's heaviest shower,
And do not shrink from sorrow's keenest wind.

XXXVI

TO THE MEMORY OF RAISLEY CALVERT

[Composed (?).—Published 1807.]

CALVERT! it must not be unheard by them
Who may respect my name that I to thee
Owed many years of early liberty.
This care was thine when sickness did condemn
Thy youth to hopeless wasting, root and stem— 5
That I, if frugal and severe, might stray
Where'er I liked; and finally array
My temples with the Muse's diadem.
Hence, if in freedom I have loved the truth;
If there be aught of pure, or good, or great, 10
In my past verse; or shall be, in the lays
Of higher mood, which now I meditate;—
It gladdens me, O worthy, short-lived, Youth!
To think how much of this will be thy praise.

PART II

I

[Composed (?).—Published 1827.]

SCORN not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned,
Mindless of its just honours; with this key
Shakspeare unlocked his heart; the melody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound; 5
With it Camões soothed an exile's grief;
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
His visionary brow: a glow-worm lamp, 4

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

IV

[Composed 1814.—Published 1815.]

It cheered mild Spenser, called from
Faery-land
To struggle through dark ways; and when
a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The Thing became a trumpet; whence he
blew
Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!

II

[Composed December 1806.—Published 1807.]

How sweet it is, when mother Fancy rocks
The wayward brain, to saunter through a
wood!
An old place, full of many a lovely brood,
Tall trees, green arbours, and ground-
flowers in flocks;
And wild rose tip-toe upon hawthorn
stocks,
Like a bold Girl, who plays her agile
pranks
At Wakes and Fairs with wandering
Mountebanks,—
When she stands cresting the Clown's
head, and mocks
The crowd beneath her. Verily I think,
Such place to me is sometimes like a
dream
Or map of the whole world: thoughts,
link by link,
Enter through ears and eyesight, with
such gleam
Of all things, that at last in fear I shrink,
And leap at once from the delicious
stream.

III

TO B. R. HAYDON

[Composed December 1815 —Published February
4, 1816 (*The Champion*); March 31, 1816 (*The
Examiner*); vol. of 1816.]

HIGH is our calling, Friend!—Creative
Art
(Whether the instrument of words she use,
Or pencil pregnant with ethereal hues,
Demands the service of a mind and heart,
Though sensitive, yet, in their weakest
part,
Heroically fashioned—to infuse
Faith in the whispers of the lonely Muse,
While the whole world seems adverse to
desert.
And, oh! when Nature sinks, as oft she
may,
Through long-lived pressure of obscure
distress,
Still to be strenuous for the bright reward,
And in the soul admit of no decay,
Brook no continuance of weak-minded-
ness—
Great is the glory, for the strife is hard!

freed,
Spurning the unprofitable yoke of care,
Rise, GILLIES, rise: the gales of youth shall
bear
Thy genius forward like a winged steed.
Though bold Bellerophon (so Jove de-
creed
In wrath) fell headlong from the fields of
air,
Yet a rich guerdon waits on minds that
dare,
If aught be in them of immortal seed,
And reason govern that audacious flight
Which heavenward they direct.—Then
droop not thou,
Erroneously renewing a sad vow
In the low dell 'mid Roslin's faded grove:
A cheerful life is what the Muses love,
A soaring spirit is their prime delight.

V

[Composed (?).—Published 1827.]

FAIR Prime of life! were it enough to gild
With ready sunbeams every straggling
shower;
And, if an unexpected cloud should lower,
Swiftly thereon a rainbow arch to build
For Fancy's errands,—then, from fields
half-tilled
Gathering green weeds to mix with poppy
flower,
Thee might thy Minions crown, and chant
thy power,
Unpitied by the wise, all censure stilled.
Ah! show that worthier honours are thy
due;
Fair Prime of life! arouse the deeper
heart;
Confirm the Spirit glorying to pursue
Some path of steep ascent and lofty aim;
And, if there be a joy that alights the claim
Of grateful memory, bid that joy depart.

VI

[Composed (?).—Published 1819.]

I WATCH, and long have watched, with
calm regret
Yon slowly-sinking star—immortal Sire
(So might he seem) of all the glittering
quire!
Blue ether still surrounds him—yet—and
yet;
But now the horizon's rocky parapet
Is reached, where, forfeiting his bright
attire,
He burns—transmuted to a dusky fire—
Then pays submissively the appointed
debt

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

To the flying moments, and is seen no
more.
Angels and gods! We struggle with our
fate,
While health, power, glory, from their
height decline,
Depressed; and then extinguished: and
our state,
In this, how different, lost Star, from thine,
That no to-morrow shall our beams re-
store!

VII

[Composed (?).—Published 1819.]

I HEARD (alas! 'twas only in a dream)
Strains—which, as sage Antiquity be-
lieved,
By waking ears have sometimes been
received
Wafted adown the wind from lake or
stream;
A most melodious requiem, a supreme
And perfect harmony of notes, achieved
By a fair Swan on drowsy billows heaved,
O'er which her pinions shed a silver gleam.
For is she not the votary of Apollo?
And knows she not, singing as he in-
spires,
That bliss awaits her which the ungenial
Hollow
Of the dull earth partakes not, nor desires?
Mount, tuneful Bird, and join the im-
mortal quires!
She soared—and I awoke, struggling in
vain to follow.

VIII

RETIREMENT

[Composed (?).—Published 1827.]

If the whole weight of what we think and
feel,
Save only far as thought and feeling blend
With action, were as nothing, patriot
Friend!
From thy remonstrance would be no
appeal;
But to promote and fortify the weal
Of her own Being is her paramount end;
A truth which they alone shall comprehend
Who shun the mischief which they cannot
heal.
Peace in these feverish times is sovereign
bliss:
Here, with no thirst but what the stream
can slake,
And startled only by the rustling brake,
Cool air I breathe; while the unincum-
bered Mind,
By some weak aims at services assigned
To gentle Natures, thanks not Heaven
amiss.

¹ See the 'Phædo' of Plato, by which this Sonnet was suggested.

IX

[Composed (?).—Published 1823 (Joanna Baillie's *Poetic Miscellanies*); ed. 1827.]

Not Love, not War, nor the tumultuous
swell
Of civil conflict, nor the wrecks of change,
Nor Duty struggling with afflictions
strange—
Not these alone inspire the tuneful shell;
But where untroubled peace and concord
dwell,
There also is the Muse not loth to range,
Watching the twilight smoke of cot or
grange,
Skyward ascending from a woody dell.
Meek aspirations please her, lone endea-
vour,
And sage content, and placid melancholy;
She loves to gaze upon a crystal river—
Diaphanous because it travels slowly;
Soft is the music that would charm for
ever;
The flower of sweetest smell is shy and
lowly.

X

[Composed (?).—Published 1815.]

MARK the concentrated hazels that en-
close
Yon old grey Stone, protected from the
ray
Of noontide suns:—and even the beams
that play
And glance, while wantonly the rough
wind blows,
Are seldom free to touch the moss that
grows
Upon that roof, amid embowering gloom,
The very image framing of a Tomb,
In which some ancient Chieftain finds
repose
Among the lonely mountains.—Live, ye
trees!
And thou, grey Stone, the pensive like-
ness keep
Of a dark chamber where the Mighty sleep:
For more than Fancy to the influence
bends
When solitary Nature condescends
To mimic Time's forlorn humanities.

XI

COMPOSED AFTER A JOURNEY ACROSS THE
HAMBLETON HILLS, YORKSHIRE

[Composed October 4, 1802.—Published 1807.]

DARK and more dark the shades of even-
ing fell;
The wished-for point was reached—but at
an hour
When little could be gained from that
rich dower
Of prospect, whereof many thousands tell.

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

Yet did the glowing west with marvellous
power
Salute us; there stood Indian citadel,
Temple of Greece, and minster with its
tower
Substantially expressed—a place for bell
Or clock to toll from! Many a tempting
isle,
With groves that never were imagined, lay
'Mid seas how steadfast! objects all for
the eye
Of silent rapture; but we felt the while
We should forget them; they are of the
sky,
And from our earthly memory fade away.

XII

[Composed (?).—Published 1807.]

—'they are of the sky,
And from our earthly memory fade away.'

THOSE words were uttered as in pensive
mood
We turned, departing from that solemn
sight:
A contrast and reproach to gross delight,
And life's unspiritual pleasures daily
wooed!
But now upon this thought I cannot
brood;
It is unstable as a dream of night;
Nor will I praise a cloud, however bright,
Disparaging Man's gifts, and proper food.
Grove, isle, with every shape of sky-built
dome,
Though clad in colours beautiful and
pure,
Find in the heart of man no natural home:
The immortal Mind craves objects that
endure:
These cleave to it; from these it cannot
roam,
Nor they from it: their fellowship is
secure.

XIII

SEPTEMBER, 1815

[Composed December, 1815.—Published February
11, 1816 (*The Examiner*); vol. of 1816.]

WHILE not a leaf seems faded; while the
fields,
With ripening harvest prodigally fair,
In brightest sunshine bask; this nipping
air,
Sent from some distant clime where
Winter wilds
His icy scimitar, a foretaste yields
Of bitter change, and bids the flowers
beware;
And whispers to the silent birds, 'Pre-
pare
Against the threatening foe your trustiest
shields.'

For me, who under kindlier laws belong
To Nature's tuneful quire, this rustling
dry
Through leaves yet green, and yon crystal-
line sky,
Announce a season potent to renew,
'Mid frost and snow, the instinctive joys
of song,
And nobler cares than listless summer
knew.

XIV

NOVEMBER 1

[Composed December, 1815.—Published January
28, 1816 (*The Examiner*); vol. of 1816.]

How clear, how keen, how marvellously
bright
The effluence from yon distant mountain's
head,
Which, strewn with snow smooth as the
sky can shed,
Shines like another sun—on mortal sight
Uprisen, as if to check approaching Night,
And all her twinkling stars. Who now
would tread,
If so he might, yon mountain's glittering
head—
Terrestrial, but a surface, by the flight
Of sad mortality's earth-sullying wing,
Unswapt, unstained? Nor shall the aerial
Powers
Dissolve that beauty, destined to endure,
White, radiant, spotless, exquisitely pure,
Through all vicissitudes, till genial Spring
Has filled the laughing vales with wel-
come flowers.

XV

COMPOSED DURING A STORM

[Composed February, 1819.—Published in *Peter
Bell* vol., 1819.]

ONE who was suffering tumult in his soul
Yet failed to seek the sure relief of prayer,
Went forth—his course surrendering to
the care
Of the fierce wind, while mid-day light-
nings prow!
Insidiously, untimely thunders growl;
While trees, dim-seen, in frenzied num-
bers, tear
The lingering remnant of their yellow hair,
And shivering wolves, surprised with
darkness, howl
As if the sun were not. He raised his eye
Soul-smitten; for, that instant did appear
Large space ('mid dreadful clouds) of
purest sky,
An azure disc—shield of Tranquillity;
Invisible, unlooked-for, minister
Of providential goodness ever nigh!

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

XVI

TO A SNOWDROP

[Composed (?).—Published 1819.]

LONE Flower, hemmed in with snows,
and white as they
But harder far, once more I see thee bend
Thy forehead as if fearful to offend,
Like an unbidden guest. Though day
by day
Storms, sallying from the mountain-tops,
waylay
The rising sun, and on the plains descend;
Yet art thou welcome, welcome as a friend
Whose zeal outruns his promise! Blue-
eyed May
Shall soon behold this border thickly set
With bright jonquils, their odours lavish-
ing
On the soft west-wind and his frolic peers;
Nor will I then thy modest grace forget,
Chaste Snowdrop, venturous harbinger
of Spring,
And pensive monitor of fleeting years!

XVII

TO THE LADY MARY LOWTHER

With a selection from the Poems of Anne, Countess of Winchelsea; and extracts of similar character from other Writers; transcribed by a female friend.

[Composed (?).—Published 1820.]

LADY! I rifled a Parnassian Cave
(But seldom trod) of mildly-gleaming ore;
And culled, from sundry beds a lucid store
Of genuine crystals, pure as those that pave
The azure brooks, where Dian joys to lave
Her spotless limbs; and ventured to
explore
Dim shades—for reliques, upon Lethe's
shore,
Cast up at random by the sullen wave.
To female hands the treasures were re-
signed;
And lo this Work!—a grotto bright and
clear
From stain or taint; in which thy blame-
less mind
May feed on thoughts though pensive not
austere;
Or, if thy deeper spirit be inclined
To holy musing, it may enter here.

XVIII

TO LADY BEAUMONT

[Composed January or February, 1807.—Published 1807.]

LADY! the songs of Spring were in the
grove
While I was shaping beds for winter
flowers;
While I was planting green unfading
bowers,

And shrubs—to hang upon the warm
alcove,
And sheltering wall; and still, as Fancy
wove
The dream, to time and nature's blended
powers
I gave this paradise for winter hours,
A labyrinth, Lady! which your feet shall
rove.
Yes! when the sun of life more feebly
shines,
Becoming thoughts, I trust, of solemn
gloom
Or of high gladness you shall hither bring;
And these perennial bowers and murmur-
ing pines
Be gracious as the music and the bloom
And all the mighty ravishment of spring.

XIX

[Composed (?).—Published 1827.]

*THERE is a pleasure in poetic pains
Which only Poets know;—'t was rightly said;
Whom could the Muses else allure to tread
Their smoothest paths, to wear their
lightest chains?
When happiest Fancy has inspired the
strains,
How oft the malice of one luckless word
Pursues the Enthusiast to the social board,
Haunts him belated on the silent plains!
Yet he repines not, if his thought stand
clear,
At last, of hindrance and obscurity,
Fresh as the star that crowns the brow of
morn;
Bright, speckless, as a softly-moulded tear
The moment it has left the virgin's eye,
Or rain-drop lingering on the pointed
thorn.*

XX

[Composed (?).—Published 1815.]

THE Shepherd, looking eastward, softly
said,
'Bright is thy veil, O Moon, as thou art
bright!
Forthwith that little cloud, in ether spread
And penetrated all with tender light,
She cast away, and showed her fulgent
head
Uncovered; dazzling the Beholder's sight
As if to vindicate her beauty's right,
Her beauty thoughtlessly disparaged.
Meanwhile that veil, removed or thrown
aside,
Went floating from her, darkening as it
went;
And a huge mass, to bury or to hide,
Approached this glory of the firmament;
Who meekly yields, and is obscured—
content
With one calm triumph of a modest pride.

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

XXI

[Composed not later than 1819.—Published 1820.]

WHEN haughty expectations prostrate lie,
And grandeur crouches like a guilty thing,
Oft shall the lowly weak, till nature bring
Mature release, in fair society
Survive, and Fortune's utmost anger try;
Like these frail snowdrops that together
cling,
And nod their helmets, smitten by the wing
Of many a furious whirl-blast sweeping by.
Observe the faithful flowers! if small to
great

May lead the thoughts, thus struggling
used to stand¹⁰
The Emathian phalanx, nobly obstinate;
And so the bright immortal Theban band,
Whom onset, fiercely urged at Jove's
command,
Might overwhelm, but could not separate!

XXII

[Composed (?).—Published 1815.]

HAIL, Twilight, sovereign of one peaceful
hour!
Not dull art Thou as undiscerning Night;
But studious only to remove from sight
Day's mutable distinctions.—Ancient
Power!

Thus did the waters gleam, the moun-
tains lower,⁵
To the rude Briton, when, in wolf-skin vest
Here roving wild, he laid him down to rest
On the bare rock, or through a leafy bower
Looked ere his eyes were closed. By him
was seen
The self-same Vision which we now be-
hold,¹⁰
At thy meek bidding, shadowy Power!
brought forth;
These mighty barriers, and the gulf be-
tween;
The flood, the stars,—a spectacle as old
As the beginning of the heavens and earth!

XXIII

[Composed perhaps 1802.—Published 1807.]

'WITH how sad steps, O Moon, thou
climb'st the sky,
How silently, and with how wan a face!'
Where art thou? Thou so often seen on
high
Running among the clouds a Wood-
nymph's race!
Unhappy Nuns, whose common breath's
a sigh⁵
Which they would stifle, move at such a
pace!
The northern Wind, to call thee to the
chase,

¹ This poem originally consisted of fifteen lines: it was shortened and classed as a Sonnet in ed. 1820. See Supplement, page 493.—ED.

Must blow to-night his bugle horn. Had I
The power of Merlin, Goddess! this
should be:

And all the stars, fast as the clouds were
riven,¹⁰
Should sally forth, to keep thee company,
Hurrying and sparkling through the clear
blue heaven;
But, Cynthia! should to thee the palm be
given,
Queen both for beauty and for majesty.

XXIV

[Composed (?).—Published 1815.]

EVEN as a dragon's eye that feels the stress
Of a bedimmed sleep, or as a lamp
Sullenly² glaring through sepulchral damp,
So burns yon Taper 'mid a black recess
Of mountains, silent, dreary, motionless:
The lake below reflects it not; the sky⁶
Muffled in clouds, affords no company
To mitigate and cheer its loneliness.
Yet, round the body of that joyless Thing
Which sends so far its melancholy light,
Perhaps are seated in domestic ring¹¹
A gay society with faces bright,
Conversing, reading, laughing;—or they
sing,
While hearts and voices in the song unite.

XXV

[Composed (?).—Published 1820.]

THE stars are mansions built by Nature's
hand,
And, haply, there the spirits of the blest
Dwell, clothed in radiance, their immortal
vest;
Huge Ocean shows, within his yellow
strand,
A habitation marvellously planned,⁵
For life to occupy in love and rest;
All that we see—is dome, or vault, or nest,
Or fortress, reared at Nature's sage com-
mand.
Glad thought for every season! but the
Spring
Gave it while cares were weighing on my
heart,¹⁰
'Mid song of birds, and insects murmuring;
And while the youthful year's prolific art—
Of bud, leaf, blade, and flower—was
fashioning
Abodes where self-disturbance hath no
part.

² The collective edd. of the Poems from 1827 to 1849 read 'suddenly'; edd. 1815, 1820, and the Sonnet-vol. of 1838 read 'sullenly'. The latter is undoubtedly the word intended by Wordsworth. Cf. 'sullen fire', Misc. Son. II. vi. l. 7 (edd. 1819, 1820, 1827); 'sullen star', Excursion IV. 487; and the 'sullen light'; i.e. the faintly glowing light of an extinguished candle, spoken of in Wordsworth's reply to the letter of Mathetes (*The Friend*, iii. 48, ed. 1818).—ED.

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

XXVI

[Composed (?).—Published 1835.]

DESPOENDING Father! mark this altered
bough,
So beautiful of late, with sunshine warmed,
Or moist with dews; what more unsightly
now,
Its blossoms shrivelled, and its fruit, if
formed,
Invisible? yet Spring her genial brow 5
Knits not o'er that discolouring and decay
As false to expectation. Nor fret thou
At like unlovely process in the May
Of human life: a Stripling's graces blow,
Fade and are shed, that from their timely
fall 10
(Misdeem it not a cankerous change) may
grow
Rich mellow bearings, that for thanks
shall call:
In all men, sinful is it to be slow
To hope—in Parents, sinful above all.

XXVII

CAPTIVITY.—MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

[Composed (?).—Published 1819.]

'As the cold aspect of a sunless way
Strikes through the Traveller's frame with
deadlier chill,
Oft as appears a grove, or obvious hill,
Glistening with unparticipated ray,
Or shining slope where he must never
stray; 5
So joys, remembered without wish or will,
Sharpen the keenest edge of present ill,—
On the crushed heart a heavier burthen lay.
Just Heaven, contract the compass of my
mind 9
To fit proportion with my altered state!
Quench those felicities whose light I find
Reflected in my bosom all too late!—
O be my spirit, like my thralldom, strait;
And, like mine eyes that stream with
sorrow, blind!'

XXVIII

ST. CATHERINE OF LEDBURY

[Composed (?).—Published 1835.]

WHEN human touch (as monkish books
attest)
Nor was applied nor could be, Ledbury
bells
Broke forth in concert flung adown the
dells,
And upward, high as Malvern's cloudy
crest;
Sweet tones, and caught by a noble Lady
blest 5
To rapture! Mabel listened at the side
Of her loved mistress: soon the music
died,

And Catherine said, ~~There I set up my rest.~~
Warned in a dream, the Wanderer long
had sought
A home that by such miracle of sound 10
Must be revealed:—she heard it now, or
felt
The deep, deep joy of a confiding thought;
And there, a saintly anchoress, she dwelt
Till she exchanged for heaven that happy
ground.

XXIX

[Composed probably 1807.—Published 1807.]

—'gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.'
THOUGH narrow be that old Man's cares,
and near,
The poor old Man is greater than he
seems:
For he hath waking empire, wide as
dreams;
An ample sovereignty of eye and ear.
Rich are his walks with supernatural
cheer; 5
The region of his inner spirit teems
With vital sounds and monitory gleams
Of high astonishment and pleasing fear.
He the seven birds hath seen, that never
part,
Seen the SEVEN WHISTLERS in their nightly
rounds, 10
And counted them: and oftentimes will
start—
For overhead are sweeping GABRIEL'S
HOUNDS
Doomed, with their impious Lord, the
flying Hart
To chase for ever, on aerial grounds!

XXX

[Composed (?).—Published 1835.]

FOUR fiery steeds impatient of the rein
Whirled us o'er sunless ground beneath a
sky
As void of sunshine, when, from that wide
plain,
Clear tops of far-off mountains we descried,
Like a Sierra of cerulean Spain, 5
All light and lustre. Did no heart reply?
Yes, there was One;—for One, asunder
fly
The thousand links of that ethereal chain;
And green vales open out, with grove and
field, 9
And the fair front of many a happy Home;
Such tempting spots as into vision come
While Soldiers, weary of the arms they
wield,
And sick at heart of strife-ful Christendom,
Gaze on the moon by parting clouds re-
vealed.

XXXI

[Composed 1806.—Published 1815.]

BROOK! whose society the Poet seeks,
Intent his wasted spirits to renew;
And whom the curious Painter doth pursue
Through rocky passes, among flowery
creeks,
And tracks thee dancing down thy water-
breaks;
If wish were mine some type of thee to
view,
Thee, and not thee thyself, I would not do
Like Grecian Artists, give thee human
cheeks,
Channels for tears; no Naiad shouldst
thou be,—
Have neither limbs, feet, feathers, joints,
nor hairs:
It seems the Eternal Soul is clothed in thee
With purer robes than those of flesh and
blood,
And hath bestowed on thee a safer good;
Unwearied joy, and life without its cares.

XXXII

COMPOSED ON THE BANKS OF A ROCKY
STREAM

[Composed (?).—Published 1820.]

DOGMA'TIC Teachers, of the snow-white
fur!
Ye wrangling Schoolmen, of the scarlet
hood!
Who, with a keenness not to be withstood,
Press the point home, or falter and demur,
Checked in your course by many a teasing
butt;
These natural council-seats your acrid
blood
Might cool;—and, as the Genius of the
flood
Stoops willingly to animate and spur
Each lighter function slumbering in the
brain,
Yon eddying balls of foam, these arrowy
gleams
That o'er the pavement of the surging
streams
Welter and flash, a synod might detain
With subtle speculations, haply vain,
But surely less so than your far-fetched
themes!

XXXIII

THIS AND THE TWO FOLLOWING WERE SUG-
GESTED BY MR. W. WESTALL'S VIEWS OF
THE CAVES, ETC., IN YORKSHIRE

[Composed 1818.—Published January, 1819 (*Black-wood's Magazine*); *Peter Bell* vol., 1819.]

PURE element of waters! wheresoe'er
Thou dost forsake thy subterranean
haunts,

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

Green herbs, bright flowers, and berry-
bearing plants,
Rise into life and in thy train appear:
And, through the sunny portion of the
year,
Swift insects shine, thy hovering pursui-
vants:
And, if thy bounty fail, the forest pants;
And hart and hind and hunter with his
spear
Languish and droop together. Nor unfelt
In man's perturbed soul thy sway benign;
And, haply, far within the marble belt
Of central earth, where tortured Spirits pine
For grace and goodness lost, thy mur-
murs melt
Their anguish,—and they blend sweet
songs with thine.¹

XXXIV

MALHAM COVE

[Composed 1818.—Published January, 1819 (*Black-wood's Magazine*); *Peter Bell* vol., 1819.]

WAS the aim frustrated by force or guile,
When giants scooped from out the rocky
ground,
Tier under tier, this semicirque profound?
(Giants—the same who built in Erin's isle
That Causeway with incomparable toil!)—
Oh, had this vast theatric structure wound
With finished sweep into a perfect round,
No mightier work had gained the plausible
smile
Of all-beholding Phœbus! But, alas,
Vain earth! false world! Foundations
must be laid
In Heaven; for, 'mid the wreck of is and
was,
Things incomplete and purposes betrayed
Make sadder transits o'er thought's optic
glass
Than noblest objects utterly decayed.

XXXV

GORDALE

[Composed 1818.—Published January, 1819 (*Black-wood's Magazine*); *Peter Bell* vol., 1819.]

AT early dawn, or rather when the air
Glimmers with fading light, and shadowy
Eve
Is busiest to confer and to bereave;
Then, pensive Votary! let thy feet repair
To Gordale-chasm, terrific as the lair
Where the young lions couch; for so, by
leave
Of the propitious hour, thou may'st per-
ceive
The local Deity, with oozy hair

¹ Waters (as Mr. Westall informs us in the letter-
press prefixed to his admirable views) are invariably
found to flow through these caverns.

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

And mineral crown, beside his jagged
urn,
Recumbent: Him thou may'st behold,
who hides¹⁰
His lineaments by day, yet there presides,
Teaching the docile waters how to turn,
Or (if need be) impediment to spurn,
And force their passage to the salt-sea
tides!

XXXVI

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE,
SEPTEMBER 3, 1802

[Composed July 31, 1802.—Published 1807.]

EARTH has not anything to show more
fair:

Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples
lie⁶

Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless
air.

Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or
hill;

Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

XXXVII

CONCLUSION

TO —

[Composed probably 1827.—Published 1827.]

If these brief Records, by the Muses' art
Produced as lonely Nature or the strife
That animates the scenes of public life¹
Inspired, may in thy leisure claim a part;
And if these Transcripts of the private
heart⁵

Have gained a sanction from thy falling
tears;

Then I repent not. But my soul hath fears
Breathed from eternity: for, as a dart
Cleaves the blank air, Life flies: now every
day

Is but a glimmering spoke in the swift
wheel¹⁰

Of the revolving week. Away, away,
All fitful cares, all transitory zeal!
So timely Grace the immortal wing may
heal,
And honour rest upon the senseless clay.

¹ This line alludes to Sonnets which will be found
in another Class.

PART III

I

[Composed (?).—Published 1842.]

THOUGH the bold wings of Poesy affect
The clouds, and wheel around the moun-
tain tops
Rejoicing, from her loftiest height she drops
Well pleased to skim the plain with wild
flowers deckt,
Or muse in solemn grove whose shades
protect⁵
The lingering dew—there steals along, or
stops¹⁰
Watching the least small bird that round
her hops,
Or creeping worm, with sensitive respect.
Her functions are they therefore less
divine,
Her thoughts less deep, or void of grave
intent¹⁰
Her simplest fancies? Should that fear
be thine,
Aspiring Votary, ere thy hand present
One offering, kneel before her modest
shrine,
With brow in penitential sorrow bent!

II

OXFORD, MAY 30, 1820

[Composed 1820.—Published 1820.]

Ye sacred Nurseries of blooming Youth!
In whose collegiate shelter England's
Flowers
Expand, enjoying through their vernal
hours
The air of liberty, the light of truth;
Much have ye suffered from Time's gnaw-
ing tooth:⁵
Yet, O ye spires of Oxford! domes and
towers!
Gardens and groves! your presence over-
powers
The soberness of reason; till, in sooth,
Transformed, and rushing on a bold ex-
change
I slight my own beloved Cam, to range¹⁰
Where silver Isis leads my stripling feet;
Pace the long avenue, or glide adown
The stream-like windings of that glorious
street—
An eager Novice robed in fluttering gown!

III

OXFORD, MAY 30, 1820

[Composed 1820.—Published 1820.]

SHAME on this faithless heart! that could
allow
Such transport, though but for a mo-
ment's space;
Not while—to aid the spirit of the place—

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

The crescent moon clove with its glittering
 The clouds, or night-bird sang from shady
 bough; 5
 But in plain daylight:—She, too, at my
 side,
 Who, with her heart's experience satisfied,
 Maintains inviolate its slightest vow!
 Sweet Fancy! other gifts must I receive;
 Proofs of a higher sovereignty I claim; 10
 Take from *her* brow the withering flowers
 of eve,
 And to that brow life's morning wreath
 restore;
 Let *her* be comprehended in the frame
 Of these illusions, or they please no more.

IV

RECOLLECTION OF THE PORTRAIT OF KING
 HENRY THE EIGHTH, TRINITY LODGE,
 CAMBRIDGE

[Composed (?).—Published 1827.]

THE imperial Stature, the colossal stride,
 Are yet before me; yet do I behold
 The broad full visage, chest of amplest
 mould,
 The vestments 'broidered with barbaric
 pride:
 And lo! a poniard, at the Monarch's side,
 Hangs ready to be grasped in sympathy 6
 With the keen threatenings of that ful-
 gent eye,
 Below the white-rimmed bonnet, far-
 descried.
 Who trembles now at thy capricious
 mood?
 'Mid those surrounding Worthies, haughty
 King, 10
 We rather think, with grateful mind
 sedate,
 How Providence educeth, from the spring
 Of lawless will, unlooked-for streams of
 good,
 Which neither force shall check nor time
 abate!

V

ON THE DEATH OF HIS MAJESTY (GEORGE
 THE THIRD)

[Composed 1820.—Published 1820.]

WARD of the Law!—dread Shadow of a
 King!
 Whose realm had dwindled to one stately
 room;
 Whose universe was gloom immersed in
 gloom,
 Darkness as thick as life o'er life could
 fling,
 Save haply for some feeble glimmering 5
 Of Faith and Hope—if thou, by nature's
 doom,
 Gently hast sunk into the quiet tomb,

Why should we bend in grief, to sorrow
 cling,
 When thankfulness were best?—Fresh-
 flowing tears,
 Or, where tears flow not, sigh succeeding
 sigh, 10
 Yield to such after-thought the sole reply
 Which justly it can claim. The Nation
 hears
 In this deep knell, silent for threescore
 years,
 An unexampled voice of awful memory!

VI

JUNE, 1820

[Composed 1820.—Published 1820.]

FAME tells of groves—from England far
 away—
 Groves! that inspire the Nightingale to
 trill
 And modulate, with subtle reach of skill
 Elsewhere unmatched, her ever-varying
 lay;
 Such bold report I venture to gainsay: 5
 For I have heard the quire of Richmond
 hill
 Chanting with indefatigable bill,
 Strains that recalled to mind a distant
 day;
 When, haply under shade of that same
 wood,
 And scarcely conscious of the dashing
 oars, 10
 Plied steadily between those willowy
 shores,
 The sweet-souled Poet of the Seasons
 stood—
 Listening, and listening long, in raptur-
 ous mood,
 Ye heavenly Birds! to your Progenitors.

VII

A PARSONAGE IN OXFORDSHIRE

[Composed 1820.—Published 1822 (*Ecclesiastical
 Sketches*, note, p. 121); ed. 1827.]

WHERE holy ground begins, unhalloved
 ends,
 Is marked by no distinguishable line;
 The turf unites, the pathways intertwine;
 And, wheresoe'er the stealing footstep
 tends,
 Garden, and that Domain where kindred,
 friends, 5
 And neighbours rest together, here con-
 found
 Their several features, mingled like the
 sound
 Of many waters, or as evening blends
 With shady night. Soft airs, from shrub
 and flower,

¹ Wallachia is the country alluded to.

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

Waft fragrant greetings to 'each silent
grave;
And while those lofty poplars gently wave
Their tops, between them comes and goes
a sky
Bright as the glimpses of eternity,
To saints accorded in their mortal hour.

VIII

COMPOSED AMONG THE RUINS OF A CASTLE
IN NORTH WALES

[Composed probably September, 1824.—Published
1827.]

THROUGH shattered galleries, 'mid roof-
less halls,
Wandering with timid footsteps oft be-
trayed,
The Stranger sighs, nor scruples to up-
braid
Old Time, though he, gentlest among the
Thralls
Of Destiny, upon these wounds hath laid
His lenient touches, soft as light that falls,
From the wan Moon, upon the towers and
walls,
Light deepening the profoundest sleep of
shade.
Relic of Kings! Wreck of forgotten wars,
To winds abandoned and the prying stars,
Time loves Thee! at his call the Seasons
twine
Luxuriant wreaths around thy forehead
hoar;
And, though past pomp no changes can
restore,
A soothing recompense, his gift, is thine!

IX

TO THE LADY E. B. AND THE HON. MISS P.

[Composed September, 1824.—Published 1827.]

Composed in the Grounds of Plass Newidd, near
Llangollen, 1824.

A STREAM, to mingle with your favourite
Dew,
Along the VALE OF MEDITATION¹ flows;
So styled by those fierce Britons, pleased
to see
In Nature's face the expression of repose;
Or haply there some pious hermit chose
To live and die, the peace of heaven his
aim;
To whom the wild sequestered region owes,
At this late day, its sanctifying name.
GLYN CAFAILGAROC², in the Cambrian
tongue,
In ours, the VALE OF FRIENDSHIP, let *this*
spot
Be named; where, faithful to a low-roofed
Cot,

¹ Glyn Myrrr.

On Deva's banks, ye have abode so long;
Sisters in love, a love allowed to climb,
Even on this earth, above the reach of
Time!

X

TO THE TORRENT AT THE DEVIL'S BRIDGE,
NORTH WALES, 1824

[Composed September, 1824.—Published 1827.]

How art thou named? In search of what
strange land,
From what huge height, descending? Can
such force
Of waters issue from a British source,
Or hath not Pindus fed thee, where the
band
Of Patriots scoop their freedom out, with
hand
Desperate as thine? Or come the inces-
sant shocks
From that young Stream, that smites the
throbbing rocks,
Of Viamala? There I seem to stand,
As in life's morn; permitted to behold,
From the dread chasm, woods climbing
above woods,
In pomp that fades not; everlasting snows;
And skies that ne'er relinquish their
repose;
Such power possess the family of floods
Over the minds of Poets, young or old!

XI

IN THE WOODS OF RYDAL

[Composed (?).—Published 1827.]

WILD Redbreast! hadst thou at Jemima's
lip
Pecked, as at mine, thus boldly, Love
might say,
A half-blown rose had tempted thee to sip
Its glistening dew; but hallowed is the
clay
Which the Muse warms; and I, whose
head is grey,
Am not unworthy of thy fellowship;
Nor could I let one thought—one motion
—slip
That might thy sylvan confidence betray.
For are we not all His without whose care
Vouchsafed no sparrow falleth to the
ground?
Who gives his Angels wings to speed
through air,
And rolls the planets through the blue
profound;
Then peck or perch, fond Flutterer! nor
forbear
To trust a Poet in still musings bound.

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

XII

[Composed (?).—Published 1827.]

WHEN Philoctetes in the Lemnian isle
Like a Form sculptured on a monument
Lay couched; on him or his dread bow
unbent
Some wild Bird oft might settle and
beguile
The rigid features of a transient smile, 5
Disperse the tear, or to the sigh give vent,
Slackening the pains of ruthless banish-
ment
From his loved home, and from heroic
toil.
And trust that spiritual Creatures round
us move, 9
Griefs to allay which Reason cannot heal;
Yea, veriest reptiles have sufficed to prove
To fettered wretchedness that no Bastille
Is deep enough to exclude the light of love,
Though man for brother man has ceased
to feel.

XIII

[Composed (?).—Published 1827.]

WHILE Anna's peers and early playmates
tread,
In freedom, mountain-turf and river's
marge;
Or float with music in the festal barge;
Rein the proud steed, or through the
dance are led;
Her doom it is to press a weary bed— 5
Till oft her guardian Angel, to some
charge
More urgent called, will stretch his wings
at large,
And friends too rarely prop the languid
head.
Yet, helped by Genius—untired com-
forter,
The presence even of a stuffed Owl for
her 10
Can cheat the time; sending her fancy out
To ivied castles and to moonlight skies,
Though he can neither stir a plume, nor
shout;
Nor veil, with restless film, his staring
eyes.

XIV

TO THE CUCKOO

[Composed (?).—Published 1827.]

NOT the whole warbling grove in concert
heard
When sunshine follows shower, the breast
can thrill
Like the first summons, Cuckoo! of thy
bill,
With its twin notes inseparably paired.
The captive 'mid damp vaults unsunned,
unaired, 5

Measuring the periods of his lonely doom,
That cry can reach; and to the sick man's
room
Sends gladness, by no languid smile
declared.
The lordly eagle-race through hostile
search
May perish; time may come when never
more 10
The wilderness shall hear the lion roar;
But, long as cock shall crow from house-
hold perch
To rouse the dawn, soft gales shall speed
thy wing,
And thy erratic voice be faithful to the
Spring!

XV

TO —

[Composed (?).—Published 1835.]

'Miss not the occasion: by the forelock take
That subtle Power, the never-halting Time,
Lest a mere moment's putting-off should make
Mischance almost as heavy as a crime.'

'WAIT, prithee, wait!' this answer Lesbia
threw
Forth to her Dove, and took no further
heed.
Her eye was busy, while her fingers flew
Across the harp, with soul-engrossing
speed;
But from that bondage when her thoughts
were freed 5
She rose, and toward the close-shut case-
ment drew,
Whence the poor unregarded Favourite,
true
To old affections, had been heard to plead
With flapping wing for entrance. What a
shriek
Forced from that voice so lately tuned to
a strain 10
Of harmony!—a shriek of terror, pain,
And self-reproach! for, from aloft, a Kite
Pounced,—and the Dove, which from its
ruthless beak
She could not rescue, perished in her
sight!

XVI

THE INFANT M— M—

[Composed (?).—Published 1827.]

UNQUIET Childhood here by special grace
Forgets her nature, opening like a flower
That neither feeds nor wastes its vital
power
In painful struggles. Months each other
chase,
And nought untunes that Infant's voice;
no trace 15

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

Of fretful temper sullies her pure cheek;
 Prompt, lively, self-sufficing, yet so meek
 That one enrapt with gazing on her face
 (Which even the placid innocence of death
 Could scarcely make more placid, heaven
 more bright) 10
 Might learn to picture, for the eye of faith,
 The Virgin, as she shone with kindred
 light;
 A nursing couched upon her mother's
 knee,
 Beneath some shady palm of Galilee.

XVII

TO —, IN HER SEVENTIETH YEAR

[Composed 1824.—Published 1827.]

SUCH age how beautiful! O Lady bright,
 Whose mortal lineaments seem all refined
 By favouring Nature and a saintly Mind
 To something purer and more exquisite
 Than flesh and blood; whene'er thou
 meet'st my sight, 5
 When I behold thy blanched unwithered
 cheek,
 Thy temples fringed with locks of gleam-
 ing white,
 And head that droops because the soul
 is meek,
 Thee with the welcome Snowdrop I com-
 pare;
 That child of winter, prompting thoughts
 that climb 10
 From desolation toward the genial prime;
 Or with the Moon conquering earth's
 misty air,
 And filling more and more with crystal
 light
 As pensive Evening deepens into night.

XVIII

TO ROTH A Q—

[Composed some years after 1822.—Published
 1827.]

ROTHA, my Spiritual Child! this head was
 grey
 When at the sacred font for thee I stood;
 Pledged till thou reach the verge of
 womanhood,
 And shalt become thy own sufficient stay:
 Too late, I feel, sweet Orphan! was the day
 For steadfast hope the contract to fulfil; 6
 Yet shall my blessing hover o'er thee still,
 Embodied in the music of this Lay,
 Breathed forth beside the peaceful moun-
 tain Stream!
 Whose murmur soothed thy languid
 Mother's ear 10

¹ The river Rotha, that flows into Windermere
 from the Lakes of Graamerc and Rydal.

After her throes, this Stream of name
 more dear
 Since thou dost bear it,—a memorial
 theme
 For others; for thy future self, a spell
 To summon fancies out of Time's dark
 cell.

XIX

A GRAVESTONE UPON THE FLOOR IN THE
 CLOISTERS OF WORCESTER CATHEDRAL

[Composed probably 1828.—Published 1829 (*The
 Keepsake*); ed. 1832.]

'MISERRIMUS!' and neither name nor
 date,
 Prayer, text, or symbol, graven upon the
 stone;
 Nought but that word assigned to the
 unknown,
 That solitary word—to separate
 From all, and cast a cloud around the fate
 Of him who lies beneath. Most wretched 6
 one,
 Who chose his epitaph?—Himself alone
 Could thus have dared the grave to agitate,
 And claim, among the dead, this awful
 crown;
 Nor doubt that He marked also for his
 own 10
 Close to these cloistral steps a burial-place,
 That every foot might fall with heavier
 tread,
 Trampling upon his vileness. Stranger,
 pass
 Softly!—To save the contrite, Jesus bled.

XX

ROMAN ANTIQUITIES DISCOVERED AT
 BISHOPSTONE, HEREFORDSHIRE

[Composed (?).—Published 1835.]

WHILE poring Antiquarians search the
 ground
 Upturned with curious pains, the Bard, a
 Seer,
 Takes fire:—The men that have been
 reappear;
 Romans for travel girt, for business
 gowned;
 And some recline on couches, myrtle-
 crowned, 5
 In festal glee: why not? For fresh and
 clear,
 As if its hues were of the passing year,
 Dawns this time-buried pavement. From
 that mound
 Hoards may come forth of Trajans, Maxi-
 mins,
 Shrunk into coins with all their warlike
 toil: 10

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

Or a fierce impress issues with its foil
Of tenderness—the Wolf, whose suckling
Twins
The unlettered ploughboy pities when he
wins
The casual treasure from the furrowed
soil.

XXI

1830

[Composed November, 1830.—Published 1835.]

CHATSWORTH! thy stately mansion, and
the pride
Of thy domain, strange contrast do present
To house and home in many a craggy rent
Of the wild Peak; where new-born waters
glide
Through fields whose thrifty occupants
abide
As in a dear and chosen banishment,
With every semblance of entire content;
So kind is simple Nature, fairly tried!
Yet He whose heart in childhood gave her
troth
To pastoral dales, thin-set with modest
farms,
May learn, if judgment strengthen with
his growth,
That, not for Fancy only, pomp hath
charms;
And, strenuous to protect from lawless
harms
The extremes of favoured life, may honour
both.

XXII

A TRADITION OF OKER HILL IN DARLEY
DALE, DERBYSHIRE

[Composed probably 1828.—Published 1829 (*The Keepsake*); ed. 1832.]

'Tis said that to the brow of yon fair hill
Two Brothers clomb, and, turning face
from face,
Nor one look more exchanging, grief to
still
Or feed, each planted on that lofty place
A chosen Tree; then, eager to fulfil
Their courses, like two new-born rivers,
they
In opposite directions urged their way
Down from the far-seen mount. No blast
might kill
Or blight that fond memorial;—the trees
grew,
And now entwine their arms; but ne'er
again
Embraced those Brothers upon earth's
wide plain;
Nor aught of mutual joy or sorrow knew
Until their spirits mingled in the sea
That to itself takes all, Eternity.

XXIII

FILIAL PIETY¹

[Composed probably 1828.—Published 1829 (*The Casket*); ed. 1832.]

On the Wayside between Preston and Liverpool.
UNTOUCHED through all severity of cold;
Inviolate, whate'er the cottage hearth
Might need for comfort, or for festal
mirth;
That Pile of Turf is half a century old:
Yes, Traveller! fifty winters have been
told
Since suddenly the dart of death went
forth
'Gainst him who raised it,—his last work
on earth:
Thence has it, with the Son, so strong a
hold
Upon his Father's memory, that his hands,
Through reverence, touch it only to re-
pair
Its waste.—Though crumbling with each
breath of air,
In annual renovation thus it stands—
Rude Mausoleum! but wrens nestle there,
And red-breasts warble when sweet sounds
are rare.

XXIV

TO THE AUTHOR'S PORTRAIT

[Painted at Rydal Mount, by W. Pickersgill, Esq.,
for St. John's College, Cambridge.]

[Composed probably 1832.—Published 1835.]

Go, faithful Portrait! and where long hath
knelt
Margaret, the saintly Foundress, take thy
place;
And, if Time spare the colours for the
grace
Which to the work surpassing skill hath
dealt,
Thou, on thy rock reclined, though king-
doms melt
And states be torn up by the roots, wilt
seem
To breathe in rural peace, to hear the
stream,
And think and feel as once the Poet felt.
Whate'er thy fate, those features have not
grown
Unrecognised through many a household
tear
More prompt, more glad, to fall than
drops of dew

¹ Thomas Scarisbrick was killed by a stroke of lightning while building a turf-stack between Ormskirk and Preston in 1779. His son James finished the stack, and while he lived kept it in constant repair in memory of the father. James died in 1824, leaving to his grandchildren goblets and decanters cut with a turf-stack between two trees. (See Mr. J. Bromley's letter to the *Athenaeum*, May 17, 1890.)
—ED.

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

By morning shed around a flower half-blown;
Tears of delight, that testified how true
To life thou art, and, in thy truth, how dear!

XXV

[Composed 1832 or 1833.—Published 1835.]

WHY art thou silent! Is thy love a plant
Of such weak fibre that the treacherous
air

Of absence withers what was once so fair?
Is there no debt to pay, no boon to grant?
Yet have my thoughts for thee been
vigilant—⁵

Bound to thy service with unceasing care,
The mind's least generous wish a mendicant

For nought but what thy happiness could
spare.

Speak—though this soft warm heart, once
free to hold

A thousand tender pleasures, thine and
mine,¹⁰

Be left more desolate, more dreary cold
Than a forsaken bird's-nest filled with
snow

'Mid its own bush of leafless eglantine—
Speak, that my torturing doubts their end
may know!

XXVI

TO B. R. HAYDON, ON SEEING HIS PICTURE
OF NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE ON THE
ISLAND OF ST. HELENA

[Composed June 11, 1831.—Published 1832.]

HAYDON! let worthier judges praise the
skill

Here by thy pencil shown in truth of lines
And charm of colours; I applaud those
signs

Of thought, that give the true poetic thrill;
That unencumbered whole of blank and
still,⁵

Sky without cloud—ocean without a
wave;

And the one Man that laboured to enslave
The World, sole-standing high on the bare
hill—

Back turned, arms folded, the unapparent
face

Tinged, we may fancy, in this dreary
place¹⁰

With light reflected from the invisible sun
Set, like his fortunes; but not set for aye
Like them. The unguilty Power pursues
his way,

And before him doth dawn perpetual run.

XXVII

[Composed (?).—Published: vol. of 1842.]

A POET!—He hath put his heart to
school,

Nor dares to move unpropped upon the
staff

Which Art hath lodged within his hand—
must laugh

By precept only, and shed tears by rule.
Thy Art be Nature; the live current quaff,

And let the groveller sip his stagnant pool,
In fear that else, when Critics grave and
cool⁷

Have killed him, Scorn should write his
epitaph.

How does the Meadow-flower its bloom
unfold?

Because the lovely little flower is free¹⁰
Down to its root, and, in that freedom,
bold;

And so the grandeur of the Forest-tree
Comes not by casting in a formal mould,
But from its own divine vitality.

XXVIII

[Composed (?).—Published: vol. of 1842.]

THE most alluring clouds that mount the
sky

Owe to a troubled element their forms,
Their hues to sunset. If with raptured eye

We watch their splendour, shall we covet
storms,

And wish the Lord of day his slow decline
Would hasten, that such pomp may float
on high?⁶

Behold, already they forget to shine,
Dissolve—and leave to him who gazed a
sigh.

Not loth to thank each moment for its
boon

Of pure delight, come whensoever it may,
Peace let us seek,—to steadfast things¹¹

attune

Calm expectations, leaving to the gay
And volatile their love of transient bowers,

The house that cannot pass away be ours.

XXIX

ON A PORTRAIT OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON
UPON THE FIELD OF WATERLOO, BY
HAYDON

[Composed August 31, 1840.—Published: vol. of
1842.]

By Art's bold privilege Warrior and War-
horse stand

On ground yet strewn with their last
battle's wreck;

Let the Steed glory while his Master's hand
Lies fixed for ages on his conscious neck;

But by the Chieftain's look, though at his
side⁵

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

Hangs that day's treasured sword, how
firm a check
Is given to triumph and all human pride!
Yon trophied Mound shrinks to a shadowy speck
In his calm presence! Him the mighty
deed
Elates not, brought far nearer the grave's
rest,
As shows that time-worn face, for he such
seed
Has sown as yields, we trust, the fruit of
fame
In Heaven; hence no one blushes for thy
name,
Conqueror, 'mid some sad thoughts, divinely blest!

XXX

COMPOSED ON A MAY MORNING, 1838

[Composed May, 1838.—Published: Sonnet-vol. of 1838.]

LIFE with yon Lambs, like day, is just
begun,
Yet Nature seems to them a heavenly guide.
Does joy approach? they meet the coming
tide;
And sullenness avoid, as now they shun
Pale twilight's lingering glooms,—and in
the sun
Couch near their dams, with quiet satisfied;
Or gambol—each with his shadow at his
side,
Varying its shape wherever he may run.
As they from turf yet hoar with sleepy dew
All turn, and court the shining and the
green,
Where herbs look up, and opening flowers
are seen;
Why to God's goodness cannot We be
true,
And so, His gifts and promises between,
Feed to the last on pleasures ever new?

XXXI

[Composed (?).—Published: vol. of 1842.]

Lo! where she stands fixed in a saint-like
trance,
One upward hand, as if she needed rest
From rapture, lying softly on her breast!
Nor wants her eyeball an ethereal glance;
But not the less—nay more—that countenance,
While thus illumined, tells of painful
strife
For a sick heart made weary of this life
By love, long crossed with adverse circumstance.
—Would She were now as when she hoped
to pass

At God's appointed hour to them who
tread
Heaven's sapphire pavement, yet breathed
well content,
Well pleased, her foot should print earth's
common grass,
Lived thankful for day's light, for daily
bread,
For health, and time in obvious duty
spent.

XXXII

TO A PAINTER

[Composed 1840.—Published: vol. of 1842.]

ALL praise the Likeness by thy skill portrayed;
But 'tis a fruitless task to paint for me
Who, yielding not to changes Time has
made,
By the habitual light of memory see
Eyes unbedimmed, see bloom that cannot
fade,
And smiles that from their birthplace
ne'er shall flee
Into the land where ghosts and phantoms
be;
And, seeing this, own nothing in its stead.
Couldst thou go back into far-distant
years,
Or share with me, fond thought! that
inward eye,
Then, and then only, Painter! could thy
Art
The visual powers of Nature satisfy,
Which hold, whate'er to common sight
appears,
Their sovereign empire in a faithful heart.

XXXIII

ON THE SAME SUBJECT

[Composed 1840.—Published: vol. of 1842.]

THOUGH I beheld at first with blank surprise
This Work, I now have gazed on it so long
I see its truth with unreluctant eyes;
O, my Beloved! I have done thee wrong,
Conscious of blessedness, but, whence it
sprung,
Ever too heedless, as I now perceive:
Morn into noon did pass, noon into eve,
And the old day was welcome as the
young,
As welcome, and as beautiful—in sooth
More beautiful, as being a thing more
holy:
Thanks to thy virtues, to the eternal youth
Of all thy goodness, never melancholy;
To thy large heart and humble mind, that
cast
Into one vision, future, present, past.

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

XXXIV

[Composed 1838.—Published: Sonnet-vol. of 1838.]

HARK! 'tis the Thrush, undaunted, undeprest,
By twilight premature of cloud and rain;
Nor does that roaring wind deaden his strain
Who carols thinking of his Love and nest,
And seems, as more incited, still more blest.
Thanks; thou hast snapped a fireside Prisoner's chain,
Exulting Warbler! eased a fretted brain,
And in a moment charmed my cares to rest.
Yes, I will forth, bold Bird! and front the blast,
That we may sing together, if thou wilt,
So loud, so clear, my Partner through life's day,
Mute in her nest love-chosen, if not love-built
Like thine, shall gladden, as in seasons past,
Thrilled by loose snatches of the social Lay.

XXXV

[Composed 1838.—Published: Sonnet-vol. of 1838.]

'Tis He whose yester-evening's high disdain
Beat back the roaring storm—but how subdued
His day-break note, a sad vicissitude!
Does the hour's drowsy weight his glee restrain?
Or, like the nightingale, her joyous vein
Pleased to renounce, does this dear Thrush attune
His voice to suit the temper of yon Moon
Doubly depressed, settling, and in her wane?
Rise, tardy Sun! and let the Songster prove
(The balance trembling between night and morn
No longer) with what ecstasy upborne
He can pour forth his spirit. In heaven above,
And earth below, they best can serve true gladness
Who meet most feelingly the calls of sadness.

XXXVI

[Composed 1837.—Published: Sonnet-vol. of 1838.]

OH what a Wreck! how changed in mien and speech!
Yet—though dread Powers, that work in mystery, spin

Entanglings of the brain; though shadows stretch
O'er the chilled heart—reflect; far, far within
Hers is a holy Being, freed from Sin.
She is not what she seems, a forlorn wretch,
But delegated Spirits comforts fetch
To Her from heights that Reason may not win.
Like Children, She is privileged to hold
Divine communion; both do live and move,
Whate'er to shallow Faith their ways unfold,
Inly illumined by Heaven's pitying love;
Love pitying innocence, not long to last,
In them—in Her our sins and sorrows past.

XXXVII

[Composed March 8, 1842.—Published: vol. of 1842.]

INTENT ON gathering wool from hedge and brake
Yon busy Little-ones rejoice that soon
A poor old Dame will bless them for the boon:
Great is their glee while flake they add to flake
With rival earnestness; far other strife
Than will hereafter move them, if they make
Pastime their idol, give their day of life
To pleasure snatched for reckless pleasure's sake.
Can pomp and show allay one heart-born grief?
Pains which the World inflicts can she requite?
Not for an interval however brief;
The silent thoughts that search for steadfast light,
Love from her depths, and Duty in her might,
And Faith—these only yield secure relief.

XXXVIII

A PLEA FOR AUTHORS

[Composed May, 1838.—Published: Sonnet-vol. of 1838.]

FAILING impartial measure to dispense
To every suitor, Equity is lame;
And social Justice, stript of reverence
For natural rights, a mockery and a shame;
Law but a servile dupe of false pretence,
If, guarding grossest things from common claim
Now and for ever, She, to works that came
From mind and spirit, grudge a short-lived fence.

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

'What! lengthened privilege, a lineal tie,
For *Books!*' Yes, heartless Ones, or be it
proved ¹⁰
That 'tis a fault in Us to have lived and
loved
Like others, with like temporal hopes to
die;
No public harm that Genius from her
course
Be turned; and streams of truth dried up,
even at their source!

XXXIX

VALEDICTORY SONNET

Closing the Volume of Sonnets published in 1838

[Composed 1838.—Published: Sonnet-vol. of
1838.]

SERVING no haughty Muse, my hands have
here
Disposed some cultured Flowerets (drawn
from spots
Where they bloomed singly, or in scat-
tered knots.)
Each kind in several beds of one parterre;
Both to allure the casual Loiterer, ⁵
And that, so placed, my Nurslings may
requite
Studious regard with opportune delight,
Nor be unthanked, unless I fondly err.
But metaphor dismissed, and thanks
apart,
Reader, farewell! My last words let them
be— ¹⁰
If in this book Fancy and Truth agree;
If simple Nature trained by careful Art
Through It have won a passage to thy
heart;
Grant me thy love, I crave no other fee!

XL

TO THE REV. CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH,
D.D., MASTER OF HARROW SCHOOL

After the perusal of his 'Theophilus Anglicanus,'
recently published

[Composed December 11, 1843.—Published 1845.]

ENLIGHTENED Teacher, gladly from thy
hand
Have I received this proof of pains be-
stowed
By Thee to guide thy Pupils on the road
That, in our native isle, and every land,
The Church, when trusting in divine com-
mand ⁵
And in her Catholic attributes, hath trod:
O may these lessons be with profit scanned
To thy heart's wish, thy labour blest by
God!
So the bright faces of the young and gay

Shall look more bright—the happy,
happier still; ¹⁰
Catch, in the pauses of their keenest play,
Motions of thought which elevate the will
And, like the Spire that from your classic
Hill
Points heavenward, indicate the end and
way.

XLI

TO THE PLANET VENUS

Upon its approximation (as an Evening Star) to
the Earth, January, 1838

[Composed January, 1838.—Published: Sonnet-
vol. of 1838.]

WHAT strong allurements draws, what
spirit guides,
Thee, Vesper! brightening still, as if the
nearer
Thou com'st to man's abode the spot grew
dearer
Night after night? True is it Nature hides
Her treasures less and less.—Man now
presides ⁵
In power, where once he trembled in his
weakness;
Science advances with gigantic strides;
But are we aught enriched in love and
meekness?
Aught dost thou see, bright Star! of pure
and wise
More than in humbler times graced human
story; ¹⁰
That makes our hearts more apt to sym-
pathize
With heaven, our souls more fit for future
glory,
When earth shall vanish from our closing
eyes,
Ere we lie down in our last dormitory?

XLII

[Composed December 24, 1842.—Published 1845.]

WANSFELL! ¹ this Household has a favoured
lot,
Living with liberty on thee to gaze,
To watch while Morn first crowns thee
with her rays,
Or when along thy breast serenely float
Evening's angelic clouds. Yet ne'er a
note ⁵
Hath sounded (shame upon the Bard!) thy
praise
For all that thou, as if from heaven, hast
brought
Of glory lavished on our quiet days.
Bountiful Son of Earth! when we are gone

¹ The Hill that rises to the south-east, above
Ambleside.

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

From every object dear to mortal sight,
As soon we shall be, may these words
attest 11
How oft, to elevate our spirits, shone
Thy visionary majesties of light,
How in thy pensive glooms our hearts
found rest.

XLIII

[Composed January 1, 1843.—Published 1845.]

WHILE beams of orient light shoot wide
and high,
Deep in the vale a little rural Town¹
Breathes forth a cloud-like creature of its
own,
That mounts not toward the radiant
morning sky,
But, with a less ambitious sympathy, 5
Hangs o'er its Parent waking to the cares,
Troubles and toils that every day pre-
pares.
So Fancy, to the musing Poet's eye,
Endears that Lingerer. And how blest
her sway,
(Like influence never may my soul reject),
If the calm Heaven, now to its zenith
decked 11
With glorious forms in numberless array,
To the lone shepherd on the hills disclose
Gleams from a world in which the saints
repose.

XLIV

[Composed (?).—Published 1827.]

IN my mind's eye a Temple, like a cloud
Slowly surmounting some invidious hill,
Rose out of darkness: the bright Work
stood still;
And might of its own beauty have been
proud,
But it was fashioned and to God was
vowed 5
By Virtues that diffused, in every part,
Spirit divine through forms of human art:
Faith had her arch—her arch, when winds
blow loud,
Into the consciousness of safety thrilled;
And Love her towers of dread foundation
laid 10
Under the grave of things; Hope had her
spire
Star-high, and pointing still to some-
thing higher:
Trembling I gazed, but heard a voice—it
said,
'Hell-gates are powerless Phantoms when
we build.'

¹ Ambleside.

XLV

ON THE PROJECTED KENDAL AND WINDERMERE RAILWAY

[Composed October 12, 1844.—Published in pam-
phlet *Kendal and Windermere Railway*, 1844;
ed. 1845.]

Is then no nook of English ground secure
From rash assault?¹ Schemes of retire-
ment sown
In youth, and 'mid the busy world kept
pure
As when their earliest flowers of hope
were blown,
Must perish;—how can they this blight
endure? 5
And must he too the ruthless change be-
moan
Who scorns a false utilitarian lure
'Mid his paternal fields at random thrown?
Baffle the threat, bright Scene, from Or-
rest-head
Given to the pausing traveller's rapturous
glance: 10
Plead for thy peace, thou beautiful romance
Of nature; and, if human hearts be dead,
Speak, passing winds; ye torrents, with
your strong
And constant voice, protest against the
wrong.

XLVI

[Composed 1844.—Published along with XLV.]

PROUD were ye, Mountains, when, in times
of old,
Your patriot sons, to stem invasive war,
Intrenched your brows; ye gloried in
each scar:
Now, for your shame, a Power, the Thirst
of Gold,
That rules o'er Britain like a baneful star,
Wills that your peace, your beauty, shall
be sold, 6
And clear way made for her triumphal car
Through the beloved retreats your arms
enfold!
Hear ye that Whistle? As her long-linked
Train
Swept onwards, did the vision cross your
view? 10
Yes, ye were startled;—and, in balance true,
Weighing the mischief with the promised
gain,
Mountains, and Vales, and Floods, I call
on you
To share the passion of a just disdain.

¹ The degree and kind of attachment which many
of the yeomanry feel to their small inheritances can
scarcely be over-rated. Near the house of one of
them stands a magnificent tree, which a neighbour
of the owner advised him to fell for profit's sake.
'Fell it!' exclaimed the yeoman, 'I had rather fall
on my knees and worship it.' It happens, I believe,
that the intended railway would pass through this
little property, and I hope that an apology for the
answer will not be thought necessary by one who
enters into the strength of the feeling.

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

XLVII

AT FURNESS ABBEY

[Composed probably 1845.—Published 1845.]

HERE, where, of havoc tired and rash
undoing,
Man left this Structure to become Time's
prey,
A soothing spirit follows in the way
That Nature takes, her counter-work pur-
suing.
See how her ivy clasps the sacred Ruin, 5
Fall to prevent or beautify decay;
And, on the mouldered walls, how bright,
how gay,
The flowers in pearly dew's their bloom
renewing!
Thanks to the place, blessings upon the
hour;
Even as I speak the rising Sun's first smile
Gleams on the grass-crowned top of yon
tall Tower, 11
Whose cawing occupants with joy pro-
claim
Prescriptive title to the shattered pile,
Where, Cavendish, *thine* seems nothing
but a name!

XLVIII

AT FURNESS ABBEY

[Composed June 21, 1845.—Published 1845.]

WELL have yon Railway Labourers to
THIS ground
Withdrawn for noontide rest. They sit,
they walk
Among the Ruins, but no idle talk
Is heard; to grave demeanour all are bound;
And from one voice a Hymn with tuneful
sound 5
Hallows once more the long-deserted
Quire
And thrills the old sepulchral earth,
around.
Others look up, and with fixed eyes admire
That wide-spanded arch, wondering how
it was raised,
To keep, so high in air, its strength and
grace: 10
All seem to feel the spirit of the place,
And by the general reverence God is
praised:
Profane Despoilers, stand ye not reproved,
While thus these simple-hearted men are
moved?

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN SCOTLAND, 1803

I

DEPARTURE

FROM THE VALE OF GRASMERE.
AUGUST, 1803

[Composed 1811.—Published 1827.]

THE gentlest Shade that walked Elysian
plains
Might sometimes covet dissoluble chains;
Even for the tenants of the zone that lies
Beyond the stars, celestial Paradise,
Methinks 'twould heighten joy, to over-
leap 5
At will the crystal battlements, and peep
Into some other region, though less fair,
To see how things are made and managed
there.
Change for the worse might please, in-
cursion bold 9
Into the tracts of darkness and of cold:
O'er Limbo lake with airy flight to steer,
And on the verge of Chaos hang in fear.

¹ Originally the opening lines of the *Epistle* to
Sir George Beaumont. See p. 408.—Ed.

Such animation often do I find,
Power in my breast, wings growing in my
mind,
Then, when some rock or hill is overpast,
Perchance without one look behind me
cast, 16
Some barrier with which Nature, from the
birth
Of things, has fenced this fairest spot on
earth.
O pleasant transit, Grasmere! to resign
Such happy fields, abodes so calm as thine;
Not like an outcast with himself at strife;
The slave of business, time, or care for life,
But moved by choice: or, if constrained
in part,
Yet still with Nature's freedom at the
heart;— 24
To cull contentment upon wildest shores,
And luxuries extract from bleakest moors;
With prompt embrace all beauty to enfold,
And having rights in all that we behold.
—Then why these lingering steps?—A
bright adieu,
For a brief absence, proves that love is
true; 30
Ne'er can the way be irksome or forlorn
That winds into itself for sweet return.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN SCOTLAND, 1803

II AT THE GRAVE OF BURNS 1803

SEVEN YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH

[Composed partly before 1807.—Published: vol. of 1842.]

I **SHIVER**, Spirit fierce and bold,
At thought of what I now behold:
As vapours breathed from dungeons cold
Strike pleasure dead,
So sadness comes from out the mould 5
Where Burns is laid.

And have I then thy bones so near,
And thou forbidden to appear?
As if it were thyself that's here
I shrink with pain; 10
And both my wishes and my fear
Alike are vain.

Off weight—nor press on weight!—away
Dark thoughts!—they came, but not to
stay;
With chastened feelings would I pay 15
The tribute due
To him, and aught that hides his clay
From mortal view.

Fresh as the flower, whose modest worth
He sang, his genius 'glinted' forth, 20
Rose like a star that touching earth,
For so it seems,
Doth glorify its humble birth
With matchless beams.

The piercing eye, the thoughtful brow, 25
The struggling heart, where be they now?—
Full soon the Aspirant of the plough,
The prompt, the brave,
Slept, with the obscurest, in the low
And silent grave. 30

I mourned with thousands, but as one
More deeply grieved, for He was gone
Whose light I hailed when first it shone,
And showed my youth 34
How Verse may build a princely throne
On humble truth.

Alas! where'er the current tends,
Regret pursues and with it blends,—
Huge Criffel's hoary top ascends
By Skiddaw seen, 40
Neighbours we were, and loving friends
We might have been;

True friends though diversely inclined;
But heart with heart and mind with mind,
Where the main fibres are entwined, 45
Through Nature's skill,
May even by contraries be joined
More closely still.

The tear will start, and let it flow;
Thou 'poor Inhabitant below,' 50
At this dread moment—even so—
Might we together
Have sate and talked where gowans blow,
Or on wild heather.

What treasures would have then been
placed 55
Within my reach; of knowledge graced
By fancy what a rich repast!
But why go on?—
Oh! spare to sweep, thou mournful blast,
His grave grass-grown. 60

There, too, a Son, his joy and pride,
(Not three weeks past the Stripling died,)
Lies gathered to his Father's side,
Soul-moving sight! 10
Yet one to which is not denied
Some sad delight. 65

For he is safe, a quiet bed
Hath early found among the dead,
Harboured where none can be misled,
Wronged, or distressed; 70
And surely here it may be said
That such are blest.

And oh for Thee, by pitying grace
Checked oft-times in a devious race,
May He, who halloweth the place 75
Where Man is laid,
Receive thy Spirit in the embrace
For which it prayed!

Sighing I turned away; but ere
Night fell I heard, or seemed to hear, 80
Music that sorrow comes not near,
A ritual hymn,
Chanted in love that casts out fear
By Seraphim.

III THOUGHTS

SUGGESTED THE DAY FOLLOWING, ON THE BANKS OF NITH, NEAR THE POET'S RESIDENCE

[Finished 1839.—Published: vol. of 1842.]

Too frail to keep the lofty vow
That must have followed when his brow
Was wreathed—'The Vision' tells us
how—
With holly spray, 5
He faltered, drifted to and fro,
And passed away.

Well might such thoughts, dear Sister,
throng
Our minds when, lingering all too long,
Over the grave of Burns we hung
In social grief— 10
Indulged as if it were a wrong
To seek relief.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN SCOTLAND, 1803

IV

TO THE SONS OF BURNS,

AFTER VISITING THE GRAVE OF THEIR FATHER

[Composed partly between June 1805 and Feb. 1806.—Published 1807.¹]

But, leaving each unquiet theme
Where gentlest judgments may misdeem,
And prompt to welcome every gleam 15
Of good and fair,
Let us beside the limpid Stream
Breathe hopeful air.

Enough of sorrow, wreck, and blight;
Think rather of those moments bright 20
When to the consciousness of right
His course was true,
When Wisdom prospered in his sight
And virtue grew.

Yes, freely let our hearts expand, 25
Freely as in youth's season bland,
When side by side, his Book in hand,
We went to stray,
Our pleasure varying at command
Of each sweet Lay.

How oft inspired must he have trod
These pathways, yon far-stretching road!
There lurks his home; in that Abode,
With mirth elate,
Or in his nobly-pensive mood, 35
The Rustic sate.

Proud thoughts that Image overawes,
Before it humbly let us pause,
And ask of Nature from what cause
And by what rules 40
She trained her Burns to win applause
That shames the Schools.

Through busiest street and loneliest glen
Are felt the flashes of his pen;
He rules 'mid winter snows, and when 45
Bees fill their hives;
Deep in the general heart of men
His power survives.

What need of fields in some far clime
Where Heroes, Sages, Bards sublime, 50
And all that fetched the flowing rhyme
From genuine springs,
Shall dwell together till old Time
Folds up his wings?

Sweet Mercy! to the gates of Heaven 55
This Minstrel lead, his sins forgiven;
The rueful conflict, the heart riven
With vain endeavour,
And memory of Earth's bitter leaven, 60
Effaced for ever.

But why to Him confine the prayer,
When kindred thoughts and yearnings
bear
On the frail heart the purest share
With all that live?—
The best of what we do and are, 65
Just God, forgive!

'The Poet's grave is in a corner of the churchyard. We looked at it with melancholy and painful reflections, repeating to each other his own verses—
"Is there a man whose judgment clear," etc."
—Extract from the Journal of my Fellow-traveller.

'Mm crowded obelisks and urns
I sought the untimely grave of Burns;
Sons of the Bard, my heart still mourns
With sorrow true;
And more would grieve, but that it turns 6
Trembling to you!

Through twilight shades of good and ill
Ye now are panting up life's hill,
And more than common strength and skill
Must ye display; 10
If ye would give the better will
Its lawful sway.

Hath Nature strung your nerves to bear
Intemperance with less harm, beware! 15
But if the Poet's wit ye share,
Like him can speed
The social hour—of tenfold care
There will be need;

For honest men delight will take
To spare your failings for his sake, 20
Will flatter you,—and fool and rake
Your steps pursue;
And of your Father's name will make
A snare for you.

Far from their noisy haunts retire, 25
And add your voices to the quire
That sanctify the cottage fire
With service meet;
There seek the genius of your Sire,
His spirit greet; 30

Or where 'mid 'lonely heights and hows,'
He paid to Nature tuneful vows;
Or wiped his honourable brows
Bedewed with toil,
While reapers strove, or busy ploughs 35
Upturned the soil;

His judgment with benignant ray
Shall guide, his fancy cheer, your way;
But ne'er to a seductive lay
Let faith be given; 40
Nor deem that 'light which leads astray
Is light from Heaven.'

¹ See Note, p. 704.

¹ Stanzas ii, iii, iv, viii, published in 1807; stanzas i, v, vi, vii, published in 1827.—Ed.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN SCOTLAND, 1803

Let no mean hope your souls enslave;
Be independent, generous, brave;
Your Father such example gave,
And such revere;
But be admonished by his grave,
And think, and fear!

V

ELLEN IRWIN

OR

THE BRAES OF KIRTLE¹

[Composed probably 1799 or 1800.—Published 1800.]

FAIR Ellen Irwin, when she sate
Upon the braes of Kirtle,
Was lovely as a Grecian maid
Adorned with wreaths of myrtle;
Young Adam Bruce beside her lay,
And there they did beguile the day
With love and gentle speeches,
Beneath the budding beeches.

From many knights and many squires
The Bruce had been selected;
And Gordon, fairest of them all,
By Ellen was rejected.
Sad tidings to that noble Youth!
For it may be proclaimed with truth,
If Bruce hath loved sincerely,
That Gordon loves as dearly.

But what are Gordon's form and face,
His shattered hopes and crosses,
To them, 'mid Kirtle's pleasant braes,
Reclined on flowers and mosses?
Alas that ever he was born!
The Gordon, couched behind a thorn,
Sees them and their caressing;
Beholds them blest and blessing.

Proud Gordon, maddened by the thoughts
That through his brain are travelling,
Rushed forth, and at the heart of Bruce
He launched a deadly javelin!
Fair Ellen saw it as it came,
And, starting up to meet the same,
Did with her body cover
The Youth, her chosen lover.

And, falling into Bruce's arms,
Thus died the beauteous Ellen,
Thus, from the heart of her True-love,
The mortal spear repelling.
And Bruce, as soon as he had slain
The Gordon, sailed away to Spain;
And fought with rage incessant
Against the Moorish crescent.

¹ The Kirtle is a river in the southern part of Scotland, on the banks of which the events here related took place.

But many days, and many months,
And many years ensuing,
This wretched Knight did vainly seek
The death that he was wooing.
So, coming his last help to crave,
Heart-broken, upon Ellen's grave
His body he extended,
And there his sorrow ended.

Now ye, who willingly have heard
The tale I have been telling,
May in Kirkconnell churchyard view
The grave of lovely Ellen:
By Ellen's side the Bruce is laid;
And, for the stone upon his head,
May no rude hand deface it,
And its forlorn ~~fit~~ ^{jet} jet!

VI

TO A HIGHLAND GIRL,

AT INVERSNEYDE, UPON LOCH LOMOND

[Composed 1803.—Published 1807.]

SWEET Highland Girl, a very shower
Of beauty is thy earthly dower!
Twice seven consenting years have shed
Their utmost bounty on thy head:
And these grey rocks; that household
lawn;
Those trees, a veil just half withdrawn;
This fall of water that doth make
A murmur near the silent lake;
This little bay; a quiet road
That holds in shelter thy Abode—
In truth together do ye seem
Like something fashioned in a dream;
Such Forms as from their covert peep
When earthly cares are laid asleep!
But, O fair Creature! in the light
Of common day, so heavenly bright,
I bless Thee, Vision as thou art,
I bless thee with a human heart;
God shield thee to thy latest years!
Thee, neither know I, nor thy peers;
And yet my eyes are filled with tears.

With earnest feeling I shall pray
For thee when I am far away:
For never saw I mien, or face,
In which more plainly I could trace
Benignity and home-bred sense
Ripening in perfect innocence.
Here scattered, like a random seed,
Remote from men, Thou dost not need
The embarrassed look of shy distress,
And maidenly shamefacedness:
Thou wear'st upon thy forehead clear
The freedom of a Mountaineer:
A face with gladness overspread!
Soft smiles, by human kindness bred!
And seemliness complete, that sways
Thy courtesies, about thee plays;

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With no restraint, but such as springs
From quick and eager visitings
Of thoughts that lie beyond the reach
Of thy few words of English speech:
A bondage sweetly brooked, a strife
That gives thy gestures grace and life!
So have I, not unmoved in mind,
Seen birds of tempest-loving kind—
Thus beating up against the wind.

What hand but would a garland cull
For thee who art so beautiful?
O happy pleasure! here to dwell
Beside thee in some heathy dell;
Adopt your homely ways, and dress,
A Shepherd, thou a Shepherdess!
But I could frame a wish for thee
More like a grave reality:
Thou art to me but as a wave
Of the wild sea; and I would have
Some claim upon thee, if I could,
Though but of common neighbourhood.
What joy to hear thee, and to see!
Thy elder Brother I would be,
Thy Father—anything to thee!

Now thanks to Heaven! that of its grace
Hath led me to this lonely place.
Joy have I had; and going hence
I bear away my recompense.
In spots like these it is we prize
Our Memory, feel that she hath eyes:
Then, why should I be loth to stir?
I feel this place was made for her;
To give new pleasure like the past,
Continued long as life shall last.
Nor am I loth, though pleased at heart,
Sweet Highland Girl! from thee to part;
For I, methinks, till I grow old,
As fair before me shall behold,
As I do now, the cabin small,
The lake, the bay, the waterfall;
And Thee, the Spirit of them all!

VII

GLEN ALMAIN

OR, THE NARROW GLEN

[Composed probably 1803.—Published 1807.]

In this still place, remote from men,
Sleeps Ossian, in the NARROW GLEN;
In this still place, where murmurs on
But one meek streamlet, only one:
He sang of battles, and the breath
Of stormy war, and violent death;
And should, methinks, when all was past,
Have rightfully been laid at last
Where rocks were rudely heaped, and rent
As by a spirit turbulent;
Where sights were rough, and sounds
were wild,
And everything unreconciled;

In some complaining, dim retreat,
For fear and melancholy meet;
But this is calm; there cannot be
A more entire tranquillity.

Does then the Bard sleep here indeed?
Or is it but a groundless creed?
What matters it?—I blame them not
Whose Fancy in this lonely Spot
Was moved; and in such way expressed
Their notion of its perfect rest.
A convent, even a hermit's cell,
Would break the silence of this Dell:
It is not quiet, is not ease;
But something deeper far than these:
The separation that is here
Is of the grave; and of austere
Yet happy feelings of the dead:
And, therefore, was it rightly said
That Ossian, last of all his race!
Lies buried in this lonely place.

VIII

STEPPING WESTWARD

[Composed June 3, 1805.—Published 1807.]

While my Fellow-traveller and I were walking by
the side of Loch Ketterine, one fine evening
after sunset, in our road to a Hut where, in the
course of our Tour, we had been hospitably
entertained some weeks before, we met, in one
of the loneliest parts of that solitary region, two
well-dressed Women, one of whom said to us,
by way of greeting, 'What, you are stepping
westward?'

'WHAT, you are stepping westward?'—
'Yea.'
—'Twould be a wildish destiny,
If we, who thus together roam
In a strange Land, and far from home,
Were in this place the guests of Chance:
Yet who would stop, or fear to advance,
Though home or shelter he had none,
With such a sky to lead him on?

The dewy ground was dark and cold;
Behind, all gloomy to behold;
And stepping westward seemed to be
A kind of heavenly destiny:
I liked the greeting; 'twas a sound
Of something without place or bound;
And seemed to give me spiritual right
To travel through that region bright.

The voice was soft, and she who spake
Was walking by her native lake:
The salutation had to me
The very sound of courtesy:
Its power was felt; and while my eye
Was fixed upon the glowing Sky,
The echo of the voice enwrought
A human sweetness with the thought
Of travelling through the world that lay
Before me in my endless way.

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IX

THE SOLITARY REAPER

[Composed Nov. 1803.—Published 1807.]

BEHOLD her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending:—
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

X

ADDRESS TO KILCHURN CASTLE, UPON LOCH AWE

[Composed ll. 1-3, 1803; finished 'long after.'—
Published 1827.]

From the top of the hill a most impressive
scene opened upon our view, a ruined Castle
on an Island (for an Island the flood had made
it) at some distance from the shore, backed by
a Cove of the Mountain Cruachan, down which
came a foaming stream. The Castle occupied
every foot of the Island that was visible to us,
appearing to rise out of the water,—mists rested
upon the mountain side, with spots of sunshine;
there was a mild desolation in the low grounds,
a solemn grandeur in the mountains, and the
Castle was wild, yet stately—not dismantled
of turrets—not the walls broken down, though
obviously a ruin.—*Extract from the Journal of
my Companion.*

CHILD of loud-throated War! the moun-
tain Stream
Roars in thy hearing; but thy hour of rest
Is come, and thou art silent in thy age;
Save when the wind sweeps by and
sounds are caught

Ambiguous, neither wholly thine nor
theirs.

Oh! there is life that breathes not; Powers
there are

That touch each other to the quick in
modes

Which the gross world no sense hath to
perceive,

No soul to dream of. What art Thou,
from care

Cast off—abandoned by thy rugged Sire,
Nor by soft Peace adopted; though, in

place
And in dimension, such that thou
might'st seem

But a mere footstool to yon sovereign
Lord,

Huge Cruachan, (a thing that meaner hills
Might crush, nor know that it had suffered

harm;) Yet he, not loth, in favour of thy claims
To reverence, suspends his own; submit-
ting

All that the God of Nature hath con-
ferred,

All that he holds in common with the
stars,

To the memorial majesty of Time
Impersonated in thy calm decay!

Take, then, thy seat, Vicegerent unre-
proved!

Now, while a farewell gleam of evening
light

Is fondly lingering on thy shattered front,
Do thou, in turn, be paramount; and rule

Over the pomp and beauty of a scene
Whose mountains, torrents, lake, and

woods, unite
To pay thee homage; and with these are

joined,
In willing admiration and respect,

Two Hearts, which in thy presence might
be called

Youthful as Spring.—Shade of departed
Power,

Skeleton of unfleshed humanity,
The chronicle were welcome that should
call

Into the compass of distinct regard
The toils and struggles of thy infant

years!
Yon foaming flood seems motionless as

ice;
Its dizzy turbulence eludes the eye,
Frozen by distance; so, majestic Pile,

To the perception of this Age, appear
Thy fierce beginnings, softened and sub-
dued

And quieted in character—the strife,
The pride, the fury uncontrollable,

Lost on the aerial heights of the Cru-
sades!¹

¹ The tradition is, that the Castle was built by a
Lady during the absence of her Lord in Palestine.

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XI

ROB ROY'S GRAVE

[Composed between June 1805 and Feb. 1806.—
Published 1807.]

The history of Rob Roy is sufficiently known; his grave is near the head of Loch Ketterine, in one of those small pinfold-like Burial-grounds, of neglected and desolate appearance, which the traveller meets with in the Highlands of Scotland.

A FAMOUS man is Robin Hood,
The English ballad-singer's joy!
And Scotland has a thief as good,
An outlaw of as daring mood;
She has her brave ROB ROY! 5
Then clear the weeds from off his Grave,
And let us chant a passing stave,
In honour of that Hero brave!

Heaven gave Rob Roy a dauntless heart
And wondrous length and strength of 10
arm:—

Nor craved he more to quell his foes,
Or keep his friends from harm.

Yet was Rob Roy as wise as brave;
Forgive me if the phrase be strong;—
A Poet worthy of Rob Roy 15
Must scorn a timid song.

Say, then, that he was wise as brave;
As wise in thought as bold in deed:
For in the principles of things 20
He sought his moral creed.

Said generous Rob, 'What need of books?
Burn all the statutes and their shelves:
They stir us up against our kind;
And worse, against ourselves.

'We have a passion—make a law, 25
Too false to guide us or control!
And for the law itself we fight
In bitterness of soul.

'And, puzzled, blinded thus, we lose
Distinctions that are plain and few:
These find I graven on my heart: 30
That tells me what to do.

'The creatures see of flood and field,
And those that travel on the wind!
With them no strife can last; they live 35
In peace, and peace of mind.

'For why?—because the good old rule
Sufficeth them, the simple plan,
That they should take, who have the 40
power,
And they should keep who can.

'A lesson that is quickly learned,
A signal this which all can see!
Thus nothing here provokes the strong
To wanton cruelty

'All freakishness of mind is checked; 45
He tamed, who foolishly aspires;
While to the measure of his might
Each fashions his desires.

'All kinds, and creatures, stand and fall
By strength of prowess or of wit: 50
'Tis God's appointment who must sway,
And who is to submit.

'Since, then, the rule of right is plain,
And longest life is but a day;
'To have my ends, maintain my rights, 55
I'll take the shortest way.'

And thus among these rocks he lived,
Through summer heat and winter snow:
The Eagle, he was lord above,
And Rob was lord below. 60

So was it—*would*, at least, have been
But through untowardness of fate;
For Polity was then too strong—
He came an age too late;

Or shall we say an age too soon? 65
For, were the bold Man living now,
How might he flourish in his pride,
With buds on every bough!

Then rents and factors, rights of chase,
Sheriffs, and lairds and their domains, 70
Would all have seemed but paltry things,
Not worth a moment's pains.

Rob Roy had never lingered here,
To these few meagre Vales confined;
But thought how wide the world, the 75
times
How fairly to his mind!

And to his Sword he would have said,
'Do Thou my sovereign will enact
From land to land through half the earth!
Judge thou of law and fact! 80

'Tis fit that we should do our part,
Becoming that mankind should learn
That we are not to be surpassed
In fatherly concern.

'Of old things all are over old, 85
Of good things none are good enough:—
We'll show that we can help to frame
A world of other stuff.

'I, too, will have my kings that take
From me the sign of life and death: 90
Kingdoms shall shift about, like clouds,
Obedient to my breath.'

And, if the word had been fulfilled,
As *might* have been, then, thought of joy!
France would have had her present Boast,
And we our own Rob Roy! 96

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Oh! say not so; compare them not;
I would not wrong thee, Champion brave!
Would wrong thee nowhere; least of all
Here standing by thy grave. 100

For Thou, although with some wild
thoughts,
Wild Chieftain of a savage Clan!
Hadtst this to boast of; thou didst love
The liberty of man.

And, had it been thy lot to live 105
With us who now behold the light,
Thou wouldst have nobly stirred thyself,
And battled for the Right.

For thou wert still the poor man's stay,
The poor man's heart, the poor man's
hand; 110
And all the oppressed, who wanted
strength,
Had thine at their command.

Bear witness many a pensive sigh
Of thoughtful Herdsman when he strays
Alone upon Loch Veol's heights, 115
And by Loch Lomond's braes.

And, far and near, through vale and hill,
Are faces that attest the same;
The proud heart flashing through the eyes,
At sound of ROB ROY's name. 120

XII

SONNET

COMPOSED AT — CASTLE

[Composed September 18, 1803.—Published 1807.]

DEGENERATE Douglas! oh, the unworthy
Lord!
Whom mere despite of heart could so
far please,
And love of havoc, (for with such disease
Fame taxes him,) that he could send forth
word
To level with the dust a noble horde, 5
A brotherhood of venerable Trees,
Leaving an ancient dome, and towers like
these,
Beggared and outraged!—Many hearts
deplored
The fate of those old Trees; and oft with
pain
The traveller, at this day, will stop and
gaze 10
On wrongs, which Nature scarcely seems
to heed;
For sheltered places, bosoms, nooks, and
bays,
And the pure mountains, and the gentle
Tweed,
And the green silent pastures, yet remain.

XIII

YARROW UNVISITED

[Composed 1803.—Published 1807.]

See the various Poems the scene of which is laid
upon the banks of the Yarrow; in particular,
the exquisite Ballad of Hamilton beginning—

'Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny, bonny Bride,
Busk ye, busk ye, my winsome Marrow!'

FROM Stirling castle we had seen
The mazy Forth unravell'd;
Had trod the banks of Clyde, and Tay,
And with the Tweed had travelled;
And when we came to Clovenford, 5
Then said my 'winsome Marrow,'
'Whate'er betide, we'll turn aside,
And see the Braes of Yarrow.'

'Let Yarrow folk, frae Selkirk town,
Who have been buying, selling, 10
Go back to Yarrow, 'tis their own;
Each maiden to her dwelling!
On Yarrow's banks let herons feed,
Hares couch, and rabbits burrow!
But we will downward with the Tweed,
Nor turn aside to Yarrow. 16

'There's Galla Water, Leader Haughs,
Both lying right before us;
And Dryborough, where with chiming
Tweed
The lintwhites sing in chorus; 20
There's pleasant Tiviot-dale, a land
Made blithe with plough and harrow:
Why throw away a needful day
To go in search of Yarrow?

'What's Yarrow but a river bare, 25
That glides the dark hills under?
There are a thousand such elsewhere
As worthy of your wonder.'
—Strange words they seemed of slight
and scorn;
My True-love sighed for sorrow; 30
And looked me in the face, to think
I thus could speak of Yarrow!

'Oh! green,' said I, 'are Yarrow's holms,
And sweet is Yarrow flowing!
Fair hangs the apple frae the rock,' 35
But we will leave it growing.
O'er hilly path, and open Strath,
We'll wander Scotland thorough;
But, though so near, we will not turn
Into the dale of Yarrow. 40

'Let beeves and home-bred kine partake
The sweets of Burn-mill meadow;
The swan on still St. Mary's Lake
Float double, swan and shadow!
We will not see them; will not go, 45
To-day, nor yet to-morrow;
Enough if in our hearts we know
There's such a place as Yarrow.

¹ See Hamilton's Ballad as above.

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'Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown!
It must, or we shall rue it: 50
We have a vision of our own;
Ah! why should we undo it?
The treasured dreams of times long past,
We'll keep them, winsome Marrow!
For when we're there, although 'tis fair,
'Twill be another Yarrow! 56

'If Care with freezing years should come,
And wandering seem but folly,—
Should we be loth to stir from home,
And yet be melancholy; 60
Should life be dull, and spirits low,
'Twill soothe us in our sorrow,
That earth hath something yet to show,
The bonny holms of Yarrow!'

XIV SONNET

IN THE PASS OF KILLICRANKY

An invasion being expected, October, 1803.

[Composed October, 1803.—Published 1807.]

Six thousand veterans practised in war's
game,
Tried men, at Killicranky were arrayed
Against an equal host that wore the plaid,
Shepherds and herdsmen.—Like a whirl-
wind came
The Highlanders, the slaughter spread
like flame; 5
And Garry, thundering down his moun-
tain-road,
Was stopped, and could not breathe
beneath the load
Of the dead bodies.—'Twas a day of
shame
For them whom precept and the pedantry
Of cold mechanic battle do enslave. 10
O for a single hour of that Dundee,
Who on that day the word of onset gave!
Like conquest would the Men of England
see;
And her Foes find a like inglorious grave.

XV

THE MATRON OF JEDBOROUGH AND HER HUSBAND

[Composed between 1803–1805.—Published 1807.]

At Jedborough, my companion and I went into
private lodgings for a few days; and the follow-
ing Verses were called forth by the character and
domestic situation of our Hostess.

AGE! twine thy brows with fresh spring
flowers,
And call a train of laughing Hours;
And bid them dance, and bid them sing;
And thou, too, mingle in the ring!
Take to thy heart a new delight; 5
If not, make merry in despite
That there is One who scorns thy power:—
But dance! for under Jedborough Tower

A Matron dwells who, though she bears
The weight of more than seventy years,
Lives in the light of youthful glee, 11
And she will dance and sing with thee.

Nay! start not at that Figure—there!
Him who is rooted to his chair!
Look at him—look again! for he 15
Hath long been of thy family.
With legs that move not, if they can,
And useless arms, a trunk of man,
He sits, and with a vacant eye;
A sight to make a stranger sigh! 20
Deaf, drooping, that is now his doom:
His world is in this single room:
Is this a place for mirthful cheer?
Can merry-making enter here?

The joyous Woman is the Mate 25
Of him in that forlorn estate!
He breathes a subterraneous damp;
But bright as Vesper shines her lamp:
He is as mute as Jedborough Tower:
She jocund as it was of yore, 30
With all its bravery on; in times
When, all alive with merry chimes,
Upon a sun-bright morn of May,
It roused the Vale to holiday.

I praise thee, Matron! and thy due 35
Is praise, heroic praise, and true!
With admiration I behold
Thy gladness unsubdued and bold:
Thy looks, thy gestures, all present
The picture of a life well spent: 40
This do I see; and something more;
A strength unthought of heretofore!
Delighted am I for thy sake;
And yet a higher joy partake:
Our Human-nature throws away 45
Its second twilight, and looks gay;
A land of promise and of pride
Unfolding, wide as life is wide.

Ah! see her helpless Charge! enclosed
Within himself as seems, composed; 50
To fear of loss, and hope of gain,
The strife of happiness and pain,
Utterly dead! yet in the guise
Of little infants, when their eyes
Begin to follow to and fro 55
The persons that before them go,
He tracks her motions, quick or slow.
Her buoyant spirit can prevail
Where common cheerfulness would fail;
She strikes upon him with the heat 60
Of July suns; he feels it sweet;
An animal delight though dim!
'Tis all that now remains for him!

The more I looked, I wondered more—
And, while I scanned them o'er and o'er,
Some inward trouble suddenly 66
Broke from the Matron's strong black
eye—

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A remnant of uneasy light,
A flash of something over-bright!
Nor long this mystery did detain 70
My thoughts,—she told in pensive strain
That she had borne a heavy yoke;
Been stricken by a twofold stroke;
Ill health of body; and had pined
Beneath worse ailments of the mind. 75

So be it!—but let praise ascend
To Him who is our lord and friend!
Who from disease and suffering
Hath called for thee a second spring;
Repaid thee for that sore distress 80
By no untimely joyousness;
Which makes of thine a blissful state;
And cheers thy melancholy Mate!

XVI

[Composed September 25, 1803.—Published 1815.]

FLY, some kind Harbinger, to Grasmere-
dale!
Say that we come, and come by this day's
light;
Fly upon swiftest wing round field and
height,
But chiefly let one Cottage hear the tale;
There let a mystery of joy prevail, 5
The kitten frolic, like a gamesome sprite,
And Rover whine, as at a second sight
Of near-approaching good that shall not
fail:
And from that Infant's face let joy appear;
Yea, let our Mary's one companion
child— 10
That hath her six weeks' solitude beguiled
With intimations manifold and dear,
While we have wandered over wood and
wild—
Smile on his Mother now with bolder
cheer. 14

XVII

THE BLIND HIGHLAND BOY

A TALE TOLD BY THE FIRE-SIDE, AFTER
RETURNING TO THE VALE OF GRASMERE

[Composed probably December, 1806.—Published 1807.]

Now we are tired of boisterous joy,
Have romped enough, my little Boy!
Jane hangs her head upon my breast,
And you shall bring your stool and rest;
This corner is your own. 5

There! take your seat, and let me see
That you can listen quietly:
And, as I promised, I will tell
That strange adventure which befell
A poor blind Highland Boy. 10

A Highland Boy!—why call him so?
Because, my Darlings, ye must know
That, under hills which rise like towers,
Far higher hills than these of ours!
He from his birth had lived. 15

He ne'er had seen one earthly sight;
The sun, the day; the stars, the night;
Or tree, or butterfly, or flower,
Or fish in stream, or bird in bower,
Or woman, man, or child. 20

And yet he neither drooped nor pined,
Nor had a melancholy mind;
For God took pity on the Boy,
And was his friend; and gave him joy
Of which we nothing know. 25

His Mother, too, no doubt, above
Her other children him did love:
For was she here, or was she there,
She thought of him with constant care,
And more than mother's love. 30

And proud she was of heart, when clad
In crimson stockings, tartan plaid,
And bonnet with a feather gay,
To Kirk he on the sabbath day
Went hand in hand with her. 35

A dog, too, had he; not for need,
But one to play with and to feed;
Which would have led him, if bereft
Of company or friends, and left
Without a better guide. 40

And then the bagpipes he could blow—
And thus from house to house would go;
And all were pleased to hear and see,
For none made sweeter melody
Than did the poor blind Boy. 45

Yet he had many a restless dream;
Both when he heard the eagles scream,
And when he heard the torrents roar,
And heard the water beat the shore
Near which their cottage stood. 50

Beside a lake their cottage stood,
Not small like ours, a peaceful flood;
But one of mighty size, and strange;
That, rough or smooth, is full of change,
And stirring in its bed. 55

For to this lake, by night and day,
The great Sea-water finds its way
Through long, long windings of the hills,
And drinks up all the pretty rills
And rivers large and strong: 60

Then hurries back the road it came—
Returns, on errand still the same;
This did it when the earth was new;
And this for evermore will do,
As long as earth shall last. 65

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- And, with the coming of the tide,
Come boats and ships that safely ride
Between the woods and lofty rocks;
And to the shepherds with their flocks
Bring tales of distant lands. 70
- And of those tales, whate'er they were,
The blind Boy always had his share;
Whether of mighty towns, or vales
With warmer suns and softer gales,
Or wonders of the Deep. 75
- Yet more it pleased him, more it stirred,
When from the water-side he heard
The shouting, and the jolly cheers;
The bustle of the mariners
In stillness or in storm. 80
- But what do his desires avail?
For He must never handle sail;
Nor mount the mast, nor row, nor float
In sailor's ship, or fisher's boat,
Upon the rocking waves. 85
- His Mother often thought, and said,
What sin would be upon her head
If she should suffer this: 'My Son,
Whate'er you do, leave this undone;
The danger is so great.' 90
- Thus lived he by Loch Leven's side
Still sounding with the sounding tide,
And heard the billows leap and dance,
Without a shadow of mischance,
Till he was ten years old. 95
- When one day (and now mark me well,
Ye soon shall know how this befell)
He in a vessel of his own
On the swift flood is hurrying down,
Down to the mighty Sea. 100
- In such a vessel never more
May human creature leave the shore!
If this or that way he should stir,
Woe to the poor blind Mariner!
For death will be his doom. 105
- But say what bears him?—Ye have seen
The Indian's bow, his arrows keen,
Rare beasts, and birds with plumage
bright;
Gifts which, for wonder or delight,
Are brought in ships from far. 110
- Such gifts had those seafaring men
Spread round that haven in the glen;
Each hut, perchance, might have its own;
And to the Boy they all were known—
He knew and prized them all. 115
- The rarest was a Turtle-shell
Which he, poor Child, had studied well;
A shell of ample size, and light
As the pearly car of Amphitrite,
That sportive dolphins drew. 120
- And, as a Coracle that braves
On Vaga's breast the fretful waves,
This shell upon the deep would swim,
And gaily lift its fearless brim
Above the tossing surge. 125
- And this the little blind Boy knew;
And he a story strange yet true
Had heard, how in a shell like this
An English Boy, O thought of bliss!
Had stoutly launched from shore; 130
- Launched from the margin of a bay
Among the Indian isles, where lay
His father's ship, and had sailed far—
To join that gallant ship of war,
In his delightful shell. 135
- Our Highland Boy oft visited
The house that held this prize; and, led
By choice or chance, did thither come
One day when no one was at home,
And found the door unbarred. 140
- While there he sate, alone and blind,
That story flashed upon his mind;—
A bold thought roused him, and he took
The shell from out its secret nook,
And bore it on his head. 145
- He launched his vessel,—and in pride
Of spirit, from Loch Leven's side,
Stepped into it—his thoughts all free
As the light breezes that with glee
Sang through the adventurer's hair.
- A while he stood upon his feet; 151
He felt the motion—took his seat;
Still better pleased as more and more
The tide retreated from the shore,
And sucked, and sucked him in. 155
- And there he is in face of Heaven.
How rapidly the Child is driven!
The fourth part of a mile, I ween,
He thus had gone, ere he was seen
By any human eye. 160
- But when he was first seen, oh me
What shrieking and what misery!
For many saw; among the rest
His Mother, she who loved him best,
She saw her poor blind Boy. 165
- But for the child, the sightless Boy,
It is the triumph of his joy!
The bravest traveller in balloon,
Mounting as if to reach the moon,
Was never half so blessed. 170
- And let him, let him go his way,
Alone, and innocent, and gay!
For, if good Angels love to wait
On the forlorn unfortunate,
This Child will take no harm. 175

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN SCOTLAND, 1803

But now the passionate lament,
Which from the crowd on shore was sent,
The cries which broke from old and young
In Gaelic, or the English tongue,
Are stifled—all is still. 180

And quickly with a silent crew
A boat is ready to pursue;
And from the shore their course they take,
And swiftly down the running lake
They follow the blind Boy. 185

But soon they move with softer pace;
So have ye seen the fowler chase
On Grasmere's clear unruffled breast
A youngling of the wild-duck's nest
With deftly-lifted oar; 190

Or as the wily sailors crept
To seize (while on the Deep it slept)
The hapless creature which did dwell
Erewhile within the dancing shell,
They steal upon their prey. 195

With sound the least that can be made,
They follow, more and more afraid,
More cautious as they draw more near;
But in his darkness he can hear,
And guesses their intent. 200

'*Lei-gha—Lei-gha*!'—he then cried out,
'*Lei-gha—Lei-gha*!'—with eager shout;
Thus did he cry, and thus did pray,
And what he meant was 'Keep away,
And leave me to myself!' 205

Alas! and when he felt their hands——
You've often heard of magic wands,
That with a motion overthrow
A palace of the proudest show,
Or melt it into air: 210

So all his dreams—that inward light
With which his soul had shone so bright——
All vanished;—'twas a heartfelt cross
To him, a heavy, bitter loss,
As he had ever known. 215

But hark! a gratulating voice,
With which the very hills rejoice:
'Tis from the crowd, who tremblingly
Have watched the event, and now can see
That he is safe at last. 220

And then, when he was brought to land,
Full sure they were a happy band,
Which, gathering round, did on the banks
Of that great Water give God thanks,
And welcomed the poor Child. 225

And in the general joy of heart
The blind Boy's little dog took part;
He leapt about, and oft did kiss
His master's hands in sign of bliss,
With sound like lamentation. 230

But most of all, his Mother dear,
She who had fainted with her fear,
Rejoiced when waking she espies
The Child; when she can trust her eyes,
And touches the blind Boy. 235

She led him home, and wept amain,
When he was in the house again:
Tears flowed in torrents from her eyes;
She kissed him—how could she chastise?
She was too happy far. 240

Thus, after he had fondly braved
The perilous Deep, the Boy was saved;
And, though his fancies had been wild,
Yet he was pleased and reconciled
To live in peace on shore. 245

And in the lonely Highland dell
Still do they keep the Turtle-shell;
And long the story will repeat
Of the blind Boy's adventurous feat,
And how he was preserved. 250

Note.—It is recorded in 'Dampier's Voyages,' that a boy, son of the captain of a Man-of-War, seated himself in a Turtle-shell, and floated in it from the shore to his father's ship, which lay at anchor at the distance of half a mile. In deference to the opinion of a Friend, I have substituted such a shell for the less elegant vessel in which my blind Voyager did actually entrust himself to the dangerous current of Loch Leven, as was related to me by an eye-witness.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN SCOTLAND, 1814

I

SUGGESTED BY A BEAUTIFUL RUIN UPON
ONE OF THE ISLANDS OF LOCH LOMOND,
A PLACE CHOSEN FOR THE RETREAT OF
A SOLITARY INDIVIDUAL, FROM WHOM
THIS HABITATION ACQUIRED THE NAME
OF

THE BROWNIE'S CELL

[Composed perhaps 1814.—Published 1820.]

1

To barren heath, bleak moor, and quaking
fen,
Or depth of labyrinthine glen;
Or into trackless forest set
With trees, whose lofty umbrage met;
World-wearied Men withdrew of yore; 5
(Penance their trust, and prayer their
store;)
And in the wilderness were bound
To such apartments as they found;
Or with a new ambition raised;
That God might suitably be praised. 10

II

High lodged the *Warrior*, like a bird of
prey;
Or where broad waters round him lay:
But this wild Ruin is no ghost
Of his devices—buried, lost!
Within this little lonely isle 15
There stood a consecrated Pile;
Where tapers burned, and mass was sung,
For them whose timid Spirits clung
To mortal succour, though the tomb
Had fixed, for ever fixed, their doom! 20

III

Upon those servants of another world
When madding Power her bolts had
hurled,
Their habitation shook;—it fell,
And perished, save one narrow cell;
Whither, at length, a Wretch retired 25
Who neither grovelled nor aspired:
He, struggling in the net of pride,
The future scorned, the past defied;
Still tempering, from the unguilty forge
Of vain conceit, an iron scourge! 30

IV

Proud Remnant was he of a fearless Race,
Who stood and flourished face to face
With their perennial hills;—but Crime,
Hastening the stern decrees of Time,
Brought low a Power, which from its home
Burst, when repose grew wearisome; 35

And, taking impulse from the sword,
And, mocking its own plighted word,
Had found, in ravage widely dealt,
Its warfare's bourn, its travel's belt! 40

V

All, all were dispossessed, save him whose
smile
Shot lightning through this lonely Isle!
No right had he but what he made
To this small spot, his leafy shade;
But the ground lay within that ring 45
To which he only dared to cling;
Renouncing here, as worse than dead,
The craven few who bowed the head
Beneath the change; who heard a claim
How loud! yet lived in peace with shame.

VI

From year to year this shaggy Mortal
went 51
(So seemed it) down a strange descent:
Till they, who saw his outward frame,
Fixed on him an unhallowed name;
Him, free from all malicious taint, 55
And guiding, like the Patmos Saint,
A pen unwearied—to indite,
In his lone Isle, the dreams of night;
Impassioned dreams, that strove to span
The faded glories of his Clan! 60

VII

Suns that through blood their western
harbour sought,
And stars that in their courses fought;
Towers rent, winds combating with
woods,
Lands deluged by unbridled floods;
And beast and bird that from the spell 65
Of sleep took import terrible;—
These types mysterious (if the show
Of battle and the routed foe
Had failed) would furnish an array
Of matter for the dawning day! 70

VIII

How disappeared He?—ask the newt and
toad,
Inheritors of his abode;
The otter crouching undisturbed,
In her dank cleft;—but be thou curbed,
O froward Fancy! 'mid a scene 75
Of aspect winning and serene;
For those offensive creatures shun
The inquisition of the sun!
And in this region flowers delight,
And all is lovely to the sight. 80

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN SCOTLAND, 1814

IX

Spring finds not here a melancholy breast,
When she applies her annual test
To dead and living; when her breath
Quickens, as now, the withered heath;—
Nor flaunting Summer—when he throws
His soul into the briar-rose; 86
Or calls the lily from her sleep
Prolonged beneath the bordering deep;
Nor Autumn, when the viewless wren
Is warbling near the BROWNIE'S Den. 90

X

Wild Relique! beauteous as the chosen
spot
In Nyssa's isle, the embellished grot;
Whither, by care of Libyan Jove,
(High Servant of paternal Love)
Young Bacchus was conveyed—to lie 95
Safe from his step-dame Rhea's eye;
Where bud, and bloom, and fruitage,
glowed,
Close-crowding round the infant-god;
All colours—and the liveliest streak
A foil to his celestial cheek! 100

II

COMPOSED AT CORA LINN

IN SIGHT OF WALLACE'S TOWER

[Composed perhaps 1814.—Published 1820.]

'—How Wallace fought for Scotland, left the name
Of Wallace to be found, like a wild flower,
All over his dear Country; left the deeds
Of Wallace, like a family of ghosts,
To people the steep rocks and river banks,
Her natural sanctuaries, with a local soul
Of independence and stern liberty.'—*M.S.*

LORD of the vale! astounding Flood;
The dullest leaf in this thick wood
Quakes—conscious of thy power;
The caves reply with hollow moan;
And vibrates, to its central stone, 5
Yon time-cemented Tower!

And yet how fair the rural scene!
For thou, O Clyde, hast ever been
Beneficent as strong;
Pleased in refreshing dews to steep 10
The little trembling flowers that peep
Thy shelving rocks among.

Hence all who love their country, love
To look on thee—delight to rove
Where they thy voice can hear;
And, to the patriot-warrior's Shade, 15
Lord of the vale! to Heroes laid
In dust, that voice is dear!

Along thy banks, at dead of night
Sweeps visibly the Wallace Wight;
Or stands, in warlike vest, 20
Aloft, beneath the moon's pale beam,
A Champion worthy of the stream,
Yon grey tower's living crest!

But clouds and envious darkness hide 25
A Form not doubtfully descried:—
Their transient mission o'er,
O say to what blind region flee
These Shapes of awful phantasy?
To what untrodden shore? 30

Less than divine command they spurn;
But this we from the mountains learn,
And this the valleys show;
That never will they deign to hold
Communion where the heart is cold 35
To human weal and woe.

The man of abject soul in vain
Shall walk the Marathonian plain;
Or thrid the shadowy gloom,
That still invests the guardian Pass, 40
Where stood, sublime, Leonidas
Devoted to the tomb.

And let no Slave his head incline,
Or kneel, before the votive shrine
By Uri's lake, where Tell 45
Leapt, from his storm-vest boat, to land,
Heaven's Instrument, for by his hand
That day the Tyrant fell.

III

EFFUSION

IN THE PLEASURE-GROUND ON THE BANKS OF THE BRAN, NEAR DUNKELD

[Composed 1814 (?).—Published 1827.]

The waterfall, by a loud roaring, warned us when
we must expect it. We were first, however,
conducted into a small apartment, where the
Gardener desired us to look at a picture of
Ossian, which, while he was telling the history
of the young Artist who executed the work, dis-
appeared, parting in the middle—flying asunder
as by the touch of magic—and lo! we are at
the entrance of a splendid apartment, which
was almost dizzy and alive with waterfalls, that
tumbled in all directions; the great cascade,
opposite the window, which faced us, being
reflected in innumerable mirrors upon the ceiling
and against the walls.'—*Extract from the Journal*
of my Fellow-Traveller.

WHAT He—who, mid the kindred throng
Of Heroes that inspired his song,
Doth yet frequent the hill of storms, 15
The stars dim-twinkling through their
forms!

What! Ossian here—a painted Thrall, 5
Mute fixture on a stuccoed wall;
To serve—an unsuspected screen
For show that must not yet be seen;
And, when the moment comes, to part 20
And vanish by mysterious art; 10
Head, harp, and body, split asunder,
For ingress to a world of wonder:

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN SCOTLAND, 1814

A gay saloon, with waters dancing
Upon the sight wherever glancing;
One loud cascade in front, and lo! 15
A thousand like it, white as snow—
Streams on the walls, and torrent-foam
As active round the hollow dome,
Illusive cataracts! of their terrors
Not stripped, nor voiceless in the mirrors,
That catch the pageant from the flood 21
Thundering adown a rocky wood.
What pains to dazzle and confound!
What strife of colour, shape and sound
In this quaint medley, that might seem
Devised out of a sick man's dream! 26
Strange scene, fantastic and uneasy
As ever made a maniac dizzy,
When disenchanting from the mood
That loves on sullen thoughts to brood!

O Nature—in thy changeable visions, 31
Through all thy most abrupt transitions
Smooth, graceful, tender, or sublime—
Ever averse to pantomime,
Thee neither do they know nor us 35
Thy servants, who can trifle thus;
Else verily the sober powers
Of rock that frowns, and stream that
roars,
Exalted by congenial sway
Of Spirits, and the undying Lay, 40
And Names that moulder not away,
Had wakened some redeeming thought
More worthy of this favoured Spot;
Recalled some feeling—to set free
The Bard from such indignity! 45

The Effigies¹ of a valiant Wight
I once beheld, a Templar Knight;
Not prostrate, not like those that rest
On tombs, with palms together prest,
But sculptured out of living stone, 50
And standing upright and alone,
Both hands with rival energy
Employed in setting his sword free
From its dull sheath—stern sentinel
Intent to guard St. Robert's cell; 55
As if with memory of the affray
Far distant, when, as legends say,
The Monks of Fountain's thronged to
force
From its dear home the Hermit's corse,
That in their keeping it might lie, 60
To crown their abbey's sanctity.
So had they rushed into the grot
Of sense despised, a world forgot,
And torn him from his loved retreat,
Where altar-stone and rock-hewn seat
Still hint that quiet best is found, 66
Even by the *Living*,—under ground;
But a bold Knight, the selfish aim
Defeating, put the Monks to shame,
There where you see his Image stand 70

¹ On the banks of the river Nid, near Knarborough.

Bare to the sky, with threatening brand
Which lingering Nid is proud to show
Reflected in the pool below.

Thus, like the men of earliest days,
Our sires set forth their grateful praise:
Uncouth the workmanship, and rude! 76
But, nursed in mountain solitude,
Might some aspiring artist dare
To seize what'er, through misty air,
A ghost, by glimpses, may present 80
Of imitable lineament,
And give the phantom an array
That less should scorn the abandoned
clay;

Then let him hew with patient stroke
An Ossian out of mural rock, 85
And leave the figurative Man—
Upon thy margin, roaring Bran!—
Fixed, like the Templar of the steep,
An everlasting watch to keep;
With local sanctities in trust, 90
More precious than a hermit's dust;
And virtues through the mass infused,
Which old idolatry abused.

What though the Granite would deny
All fervour to the sightless eye; 95
And touch from rising suns in vain
Solicit a Memnonian strain;
Yet, in some fit of anger sharp,
The wind might force the deep-grooved
harp
To utter melancholy moans 100
Not unconnected with the tones
Of soul-sick flesh and weary bones;
While grove and river notes would lend,
Less deeply sad, with these to blend!

Vain pleasures of luxurious life, 105
For ever with yourselves at strife;
Through town and country both deranged
By affectations interchanged,
And all the perishable gauds
That heaven-deserted man applauds; 110
When will your hapless patrons learn
To watch and ponder—to discern
The freshness, the everlasting youth,
Of admiration sprung from truth;
From beauty infinitely growing 115
Upon a mind with love o'erflowing—
To sound the depths of every Art
That seeks its wisdom through the heart?

Thus (where the intrusive Pile, ill-
graced
With baubles of theatric taste, 120
O'erlooks the torrent breathing showers
On motley bands of alien flowers
In stiff confusion set or sown,
Till Nature cannot find her own,
Or keep a remnant of the sod 125
Which Caledonian Heroes trod)
I mused; and, thirsting for redress,
Recoiled into the wilderness.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN SCOTLAND, 1814

IV YARROW VISITED

SEPTEMBER, 1814

[Composed 1814.—Published 1815.]
(See page 292.)

AND is this—Yarrow?—*This* the Stream
Of which my fancy cherished,
So faithfully, a waking dream?
An image that hath perished!
O that some Minstrel's harp were near, 5
To utter notes of gladness,
And chase this silence from the air,
That fills my heart with sadness!

Yet why?—a silvery current flows
With uncontrolled meanderings;
Nor have these eyes by greener hills
Been soothed, in all my wanderings.
And, through her depths, Saint Mary's
Lake
Is visibly delighted;
For not a feature of those hills
Is in the mirror slighted.

A blue sky bends o'er Yarrow vale,
Save where that pearly whiteness
Is round the rising sun diffused,
A tender hazy brightness;
Mild dawn of promise! that excludes
All profitless dejection;
Though not unwilling here to admit
A pensive recollection.

Where was it that the famous Flower 25
Of Yarrow Vale lay bleeding?
His bed perchance was yon smooth
mound
On which the herd is feeding:
And haply from this crystal pool,
Now peaceful as the morning,
The Water-wraith ascended thrice—
And gave his doleful warning.

Delicious is the Lay that sings
The haunts of happy Lovers,
The path that leads them to the grove,
The leafy grove that covers:
And Pity sanctifies the Verse
That paints, by strength of sorrow,
The unconquerable strength of love;
Bear witness, rueful Yarrow!

But thou, that didst appear so fair
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation:
Meek loveliness is round thee spread, 45
A softness still and holy;
The grace of forest charms decayed,
And pastoral melancholy.

That region left, the vale unfolds
Rich groves of lofty stature, 50
With Yarrow winding through the pomp
Of cultivated nature;
And, rising from those lofty groves,
Behold a Ruin hoary!
The shattered front of Newark's Towers,
Renowned in Border story. 56

10 Fair scenes for childhood's opening
bloom,
For sportive youth to stray in;
For manhood to enjoy his strength;
And age to wear away in! 60
Yon cottage seems a bower of bliss,
15 A covert for protection
Of tender thoughts, that nestle there—
The brood of chaste affection.

How sweet, on this autumnal day, 65
The wild-wood fruits to gather,
20 And on my True-love's forehead plant
A crest of blooming heather!
And what if I enwreath my own!
'Twere no offence to reason; 70
The sober Hills thus deck their brows
To meet the wintry season.

I see—but not by sight alone,
Loved Yarrow, have I won thee;
A ray of fancy still survives— 75
Her sunshine plays upon thee!
Thy ever-youthful waters keep
30 A course of lively pleasure;
And gladsome notes my lips can breathe,
Accordant to the measure. 80

The vapours linger round the Heights,
They melt, and soon must vanish;
One hour is theirs, nor more is mine—
Sad thought, which I would banish,
But that I know, where'er I go, 85
Thy genuine image, Yarrow!
Will dwell with me—to heighten joy,
40 And cheer my mind in sorrow.

POEMS DEDICATED TO NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND LIBERTY

PART I

I

COMPOSED BY THE SEA-SIDE, NEAR CALAIS,
AUGUST, 1802

[Composed August, 1802.—Published 1807.]

FAIR Star of evening, Splendour of the
west,
Star of my Country!—on the horizon's
brink
Thou hangest, stooping, as might seem,
to sink
On England's bosom; yet well pleased to
rest,
Meanwhile, and be to her a glorious
crest
Conspicuous to the Nations. Thou, I
think,
Shouldst be my Country's emblem; and
shouldst wink,
Bright Star! with laughter on her banners,
drest
In thy fresh beauty. There! that dusky
spot
Beneath thee, that is England; there she
lies.
Blessings be on you both! one hope, one
lot,
One life, one glory!—I, with many a fear
For my dear Country, many heartfelt
sighs,
Among men who do not love her, linger
here.

II

CALAIS, AUGUST, 1802

[Composed August, 1802.—Published January 29,
1803 (*Morning Post*); 1807.]

Is it a reed that's shaken by the wind,
Or what is it that ye go forth to see?
Lords, lawyers, statesmen, squires of low
degree,
Men known, and men unknown, sick,
lame, and blind,
Post forward all, like creatures of one
kind,
With first-fruit offerings crowd to bend
the knee
In France, before the new-born Majesty.
'Tis ever thus. Ye men of prostrate mind,

¹ This Sonnet (II), as well as Nos. IV, V, VIII, IX, XVI and, XVII appeared in the *Morning Post* with the signature W. L. D.,—initials which probably stand for Wordsworth's *Libertati dedicavit*.—Ed.

A seemly reverence may be paid to power;
But that's a loyal virtue, never sown 10
In haste, nor springing with a transient
shower:

When truth, when sense, when liberty
were flown,
What hardship had it been to wait an
hour?
Shame on you, feeble Heads, to slavery
prone!

III

COMPOSED NEAR CALAIS, ON THE ROAD
LEADING TO ARDRES, AUGUST 7, 1802

[Composed August, 1802.—Published 1807.]

JONES! as from Calais southward you
and I
Went pacing side by side, this public
Way
Streamed with the pomp of a too-credu-
lous day,¹
When faith was pledged to new-born
Liberty:
A homeless sound of joy was in the sky:
From hour to hour the antiquated Earth
Beat like the heart of Man: songs, gar-
lands, mirth,
Banners, and happy faces, far and nigh!
And now, sole register that these things
were,
Two solitary greetings have I heard, 10
'Good morrow, Citizen!' a hollow word,
As if a dead man spake it! Yet despair
Touches me not, though pensive as a bird
Whose vernal coverts winter hath laid
bare.²

IV

1801

[Composed May 21, 1802.—Published September
6, 1802 (*Morning Post*); January 29, 1803 (*Ibid.*);
1807.]

I GRIEVED for Buonaparté, with a vain
And an unthinking grief! The tenderest
mood
Of that Man's mind—what can it be?
what food
Fed his first hopes? what knowledge
could he gain?
'Tis not in battles that from youth we
train
The Governor who must be wise and
good,

¹ July 14, 1790.

² See Note, p. 705.

POEMS DEDICATED TO NATIONAL

And temper with the sternness of the
brain
Thoughts motherly, and meek as woman-
hood.
Wisdom doth live with children round
her knees:
Books, leisure, perfect freedom, and the
talk
Man holds with week-day man in the
hourly walk
Of the mind's business: these are the
degrees
By which true Sway doth mount; this is
the stalk
True Power doth grow on; and her
rights are these.

V

CALAIS, AUGUST 15, 1802

[Composed August 15, 1802.—Published February
26, 1803 (*Morning Post*); 1807.]

FESTIVALS have I seen that were not
names:
This is young Buonaparté's natal day,
And his is henceforth an established
sway—
Consul for life. With worship France
proclaims
Her approbation, and with pomps and
games.
Heaven grant that other Cities may begay!
Calais is not: and I have bent my way
To the sea-coast, noting that each man
frames
His business as he likes. Far other show
My youth here witnessed, in a prouder
time;
The senselessness of joy was then sub-
lime!
Happy is he, who, caring not for Pope,
Consul, or King, can sound himself to
know
The destiny of Man, and live in hope.

VI

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN
REPUBLIC¹

[Composed probably August, 1802.—Published
1807.]

ONCE did She hold the gorgeous east in
fee;
And was the safeguard of the west: the
worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
Venice, the eldest Child of Liberty.
She was a maiden City, bright and free;
No guile seduced, no force could violate;
And, when she took unto herself a Mate,
She must espouse the everlasting Sea.

¹ By the treaty of Campo Formio, 1797.—Ed.

And what if she had seen those glories
fade,
Those titles vanish, and that strength
decay;
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
When her long life hath reached its final
day:
Men are we, and must grieve when even
the Shade
Of that which once was great is passed
away.

VII

THE KING OF SWEDEN

[Composed probably August, 1802.—Published
1807.]

THE Voice of song from distant lands
shall call
To that great King: shall hail the crownéd
Youth
Who, taking counsel of unbending Truth,
By one example hath set forth to all
How they with dignity may stand; or
fall,
If fall they must. Now, whither doth it
tend?
And what to him and his shall be the
end?
That thought is one which neither can
appal
Nor cheer him; for the illustrious Swede
hath done
The thing which ought to be; is raised
above
All consequences: work he hath begun
Of fortitude, and piety, and love,
Which all his glorious ancestors approve:
The heroes bless him, him their rightful
son.¹

VIII

TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE²

[Composed probably August, 1802.—Published
February 2, 1803 (*Morning Post*); 1807.]

TOUSSAINT, the most unhappy man of
men!
Whether the whistling Rustic tend his
plough
Within thy hearing, or thy head be now
Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless
den;—

¹ See note.—W. (The 'crownéd Youth' was Gus-
tavus IV of Sweden: born 1778; crownéd 1792;
abdicated 1809. See Part II, Sonnets xx, xxi.—Ed.)

² François Dominique Toussaint, surnamed
L'Ouverture, was governor of St. Domingo, and
chief of the African slaves enfranchised by the decree
of the French Convention (1794). He resisted Napo-
leon's edict re-establishing slavery in St. Domingo,
was arrested and sent to Paris in June, 1802, and
there died after ten month's imprisonment in April,
1803.—Ed.

INDEPENDENCE AND LIBERTY

O miserable Chieftain! where and when
Wilt thou find patience! Yet die not; do
thou 6

Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow:
Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left
behind

Powers that will work for thee: air, earth,
and skies; 10

There's not a breathing of the common
wind

That will forget thee; thou hast great
allies;

Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

IX

SEPTEMBER 1, 1802

[Composed September 1, 1802.—Published
February 11, 1803 (*Morning Post*); 1807.]

Among the capricious acts of tyranny that dis-
graced those times, was the chasing of all
Negroes from France by decree of the govern-
ment: we had a Fellow-passenger who was one
of the expelled.

We had a female Passenger who came
From Calais with us, spotless in array,—
A white-robed Negro, like a lady gay,
Yet downcast as a woman fearing blame;
Meek, destitute, as seemed, of hope or
aim 5

She sate, from notice turning not away,
But on all proffered intercourse did lay
A weight of languid speech, or to the same
No sign of answer made by word or face:
Yet still her eyes retained their tropic fire,
That, burning independent of the mind,
Joined with the lustre of her rich attire
To mock the Outcast—O ye Heavens, be
kind! 13

And feel, thou Earth, for this afflicted
Race!

X

COMPOSED IN THE VALLEY NEAR DOVER,
ON THE DAY OF LANDING

[Composed August 30, 1802.—Published 1807.]

HERE, on our native soil, we breathe once
more.

The cock that crows, the smoke that curls,
that sound

Of bells;—those boys who in yon meadow-
ground

In white-sleeved shirts are playing; and
the roar

Of the waves breaking on the chalky
shore;— 5

All, all are English. Oft have I looked
round

With joy in Kent's green vales; but never
found

Myself so satisfied in heart before.

Europe is yet in bonds; but let that pass,
Thought for another moment. Thou art
free, 10

My Country! and 'tis joy enough and pride
For one hour's perfect bliss, to tread the
grass

Of England once again, and hear and see,
With such a dear Companion at my side.

XI

SEPTEMBER, 1802. NEAR DOVER

[Composed September, 1802.—Published 1807.]

INLAND, within a hollow vale, I stood;
And saw, while sea was calm and air was
clear,

The coast of France—the coast of France
how near!

Drawn almost into frightful neighbour-
hood.

I shrunk; for verily the barrier flood 5
Was like a lake, or river bright and fair,
A span of waters; yet what power is there!
What mightiness for evil and for good!

Even so doth God protect us if we be
Virtuous and wise. Winds blow, and
waters roll, 10

Strength to the brave, and Power, and
Deity;

Yet in themselves are nothing! One decree
Spake laws to *them*, and said that by the
soul

Only, the Nations shall be great and free.

XII

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGA-
TION OF SWITZERLAND

[Composed probably early in 1807.—Published
1807.]

Two Voices are there; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains; each a mighty
Voice:

In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty!

There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee
Thou fought'st against him; but hast
vainly striven: 6

Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art
driven,

Where not a torrent murmurs heard by
thee.

Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been
bereft:

Then cleave, O cleave to that which still
is left; 10

For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow
would it be

That Mountain floods should thunder as
before,

And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful Voice be heard by thee!

POEMS DEDICATED TO NATIONAL

XIII

WRITTEN IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER, 1802

[Composed September, 1802.—Published 1807.]

O FRIEND! I know not which way I must look

For comfort, being, as I am, oppress,
To think that now our life is only drest
For show; mean handy-work of crafts-
man, cook,

Or groom!—We must run glittering like
a brook

In the open sunshine, or we are unblest:
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry; and these we adore: 10
Plain living and high thinking are no
more:

The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household
laws.

XIV

LONDON, 1802

[Composed September, 1802.—Published 1807.]

MILTON! thou shouldst be living at this
hour:

England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and
bower,

Have forfeited their ancient English
dower

Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom,
power.

Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart;
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like
the sea: 10

Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

XV

[Composed probably 1802.—Published 1807.]

GREAT men have been among us; hands
that penned

And tongues that uttered wisdom—better
none:

The later Sidney, Marvel, Harrington,
Young Vane, and others who called Mil-
ton friend.

These moralists could act and compre-
hend: 5

They knew how genuine glory was put on;

Taught us how rightfully a nation shone
In splendour: what strength was, that
would not bend

But in magnanimous meekness. France,
'tis strange,

Hath brought forth no such souls as we
had then. 10

Perpetual emptiness! unceasing change!
No single volume paramount, no code,
No master spirit, no determined road;
But equally a want of books and men!

XVI

[Composed 1802 or 1803.—Published April 16,
1803 (*Morning Post*); 1807.]

It is not to be thought of that the Flood
Of British freedom, which, to the open sea
Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity
Hath flowed, 'with pomp of waters, un-
withstood,' 4

Roused though it be full often to a mood
Which spurns the check of salutary bands,
That this most famous Stream in bogs
and sands

Should perish; and to evil and to good
Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung
Armoury of the invincible Knights of old:
We must be free or die, who speak the
tongue 11

That Shakspeare spake; the faith and
morals hold

Which Milton held.—In every thing we
are sprung

Of Earth's first blood, have titles mani-
fold.

XVII

[Composed 1802 or 1803.—Published September
17, 1803 (*Morning Post*); 1807.]

WHEN I have borne in memory what has
tamed

Great Nations, how ennobling thoughts
depart

When men change swords for ledgers, and
desert

The student's bower for gold, some fears
unnamed

I had, my Country—am I to be blamed?
Now, when I think of thee, and what
thou art, 6

Verily, in the bottom of my heart,
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.

For dearly must we prize thee; we who
find

In thee a bulwark for the cause of men; 10
And I by my affection was beguiled:

What wonder if a Poet now and then,
Among the many movements of his mind,
Felt for thee as a lover or a child!

INDEPENDENCE AND LIBERTY

XVIII

OCTOBER, 1803

[Composed October, 1803.—Published 1807.]

ONE might believe that natural miseries
Had blasted France, and made of it a land
Unfit for men; and that in one great band
Her sons were bursting forth, to dwell at
ease.

But 'tis a chosen soil, where sun and
breeze
Shed gentle favours: rural works are
there,

And ordinary business without care;
Spot rich in all things that can soothe and
please!

How piteous then that there should be
such dearth

Of knowledge; that whole myriads should
unite

To work against themselves such fell
despite:

Should come in frenzy and in drunken
mirth,

Impatient to put out the only light
Of Liberty that yet remains on earth!

XIX

[Composed 1803 (?).—Published 1807.]

THERE is a bondage worse, far worse, to
bear

Than his who breathes, by roof, and floor,
and wall,

Pent in, a Tyrant's solitary Thrall:

'Tis his who walks about in the open air,
One of a Nation who, henceforth, must
wear

Their fetters in their souls. For who
could be,

Who, even the best, in such condition, free
From self-reproach, reproach that he
must share

With Human-nature? Never be it ours
To see the sun how brightly it will shine,

And know that noble feelings, manly
powers,

Instead of gathering strength, must droop
and pine;

And earth with all her pleasant fruits and
flowers

Fade, and participate in man's decline.

XX

OCTOBER, 1803

[Composed October, 1803.—Published 1807.]

THESE times strike monied worldlings
with dismay:

Even rich men, brave by nature, taint
the air

With words of apprehension and despair:
While tens of thousands, thinking on the
affray,

Men unto whom sufficient for the day

And minds not stinted or untilled are
given,

Sound, healthy, children of the God of
heaven,

Are cheerful as the rising sun in May.
What do we gather hence but firmer faith

That every gift of noble origin
Is breathed upon by Hope's perpetual
breath;

That virtue and the faculties within
Are vital,—and that riches are akin

To fear, to change, to cowardice, and
death?

XXI

[Composed probably 1803.—Published 1807.]

ENGLAND! the time is come when thou
shouldst wean

Thy heart from its emasculating food;
The truth should now be better under-
stood;

Old things have been unsettled; we have
seen

Fair seed-time, better harvest might have
been

But for thy trespasses; and, at this day,
If for Greece, Egypt, India, Africa,

Aught good were destined, thou wouldst
step between.

England! all nations in this charge agree:
But worse, more ignorant in love and
hate,

Far—far more abject, is thine Enemy:
Therefore the wise pray for thee, though
the freight

Of thy offences be a heavy weight:
Oh grief that Earth's best hopes rest all
with Thee!

XXII

OCTOBER, 1803

[Composed October, 1803.—Published 1807.]

WHEN, looking on the present face of
things,

I see one man, of men the meanest too!
Raised up to sway the world, to do, undo,

With mighty Nations for his underlings,
The great events with which old story
rings

Seem vain and hollow; I find nothing
great:

Nothing is left which I can venerate;
So that a doubt almost within me springs

Of Providence, such emptiness at length
Seems at the heart of all things. But,

great God!
I measure back the steps which I have
trod;

And tremble, seeing whence proceeds the
strength

Of such poor Instruments, with thoughts
sublime

I tremble at the sorrow of the time.

POEMS DEDICATED TO NATIONAL

XXIII

TO THE MEN OF KENT. OCTOBER, 1803

[Composed Oct. 1803.—Published 1807.]

VANGUARD of Liberty, ye men of Kent,
Ye children of a Soil that doth advance
Her haughty brow against the coast of
France,

Now is the time to prove your hardiment!
To France be words of invitation sent! 5
They from their fields can see the coun-
tenance

Of your fierce war, may ken the glittering
lance,
And hear you shouting forth your brave
intent.

Left single, in bold parley, ye, of yore,
Did from the Norman win a gallant
wreath; 10

Confirmed the charters that were yours
before;—

No parleying now. In Britain is one
breath;

We all are with you now from shore to
shore;—

Ye men of Kent, 'tis victory or death!

XXIV

[Composed (?).—Published 1837.]

WHAT if our numbers barely could defy
The arithmetic of babes, must foreign
hordes,

Slaves, vile as ever were befooled by words,
Striking through English breasts the
anarchy

Of Terror, bear us to the ground, and tie
Our hands behind our backs with felon
cords? 6

Yields every thing to discipline of swords?
Is man as good as man, none low, none
high?—

Nor discipline nor valour can withstand
The shock, nor quell the inevitable rout,
When in some great extremity breaks
out 11

A people, on their own beloved Land
Risen, like one man, to combat in the sight
Of a just God for liberty and right.

XXV

LINES ON THE EXPECTED INVASION

1803

[Composed 1803.—Published: vol. of 1842.]

COME ye—who, if (which Heaven avert!)
the Land

Were with herself at strife, would take
your stand,

Like gallant Falkland, by the Monarch's
side,

And, like Montrose, make Loyalty your
pride—

Come ye—who, not less zealous, might
display 5

Banners at enmity with regal sway,
And, like the Pym and Miltons of that
day,

Think that a State would live in sounder
health

If Kingship bowed its head to Common-
wealth—

Ye too—whom no discreditable fear 10
Would keep, perhaps with many a fruit-
less tear,

Uncertain what to choose and how to
steer—

And ye—who might mistake for sober
sense

And wise reserve the plea of indolence—
Come ye—whate'er your creed—O waken 15

all,
Whate'er your temper, at your Country's
call;

Resolving (this a free-born Nation can)
To have one Soul, and perish to a man,

Or save this honoured Land from every
Lord 19

But British reason and the British sword.

XXVI

ANTICIPATION. OCTOBER, 1803

[Composed October, 1803.—Published 1803 (*The Poetical Register*, iii. 340); 1804 (*The Anti-Gallican*); 1807.]

SHOUT, for a mighty Victory is won!
On British ground the Invaders are laid
low;

The breath of Heaven has drifted them
like snow,

And left them lying in the silent sun,
Never to rise again!—the work is done. 5

Come forth, ye old men, now in peaceful
show

And greet your sons! drums beat and
trumpets blow!

Make merry, wives! ye little children, stun
Your grandame's ears with pleasure of
your noise!

Clap, infants, clap your hands! Divine
must be 10

That triumph, when the very worst, the
pain,

And even the prospect of our brethren
slain,

Hath something in it which the heart
enjoys:—

In glory will they sleep and endless
sanctity.

INDEPENDENCE AND LIBERTY

XXVII

NOVEMBER, 1806

[Composed 1806.—Published 1807.]

ANOTHER year!—another deadly blow!
 Another mighty Empire¹ overthrown!
 And We are left, or shall be left, alone;
 The last that dare to struggle with the
 Foe.
 'Tis well! from this day forward we shall
 know
 That in ourselves our safety must be
 sought;
 That by our own right hands it must be
 wrought;
 That we must stand unpropped, or be
 laid low.
 O dastard whom such foretaste doth not
 cheer!
 We shall exult, if they who rule the land
 Be men who hold its many blessings
 dear,
 Wise, upright, valiant; not a servile band,
 Who are to judge of danger which they
 fear,
 And honour which they do not under-
 stand.

XXVIII

ODE

I

[Composed probably January, 1816.—Published:
 vol. of 1816.]

WHO rises on the banks of Seine,
 And binds her temples with the civic
 wreath?
 What joy to read the promise of her mien!
 How sweet to rest her wide-spread wings
 beneath!
 But they are ever playing,
 And twinkling in the light,
 And, if a breeze be straying,
 That breeze she will invite;
 And stands on tiptoe, conscious she is
 fair,
 And calls a look of love into her face,
 And spreads her arms, as if the general air
 Alone could satisfy her wide embrace.
 —Melt, Principalities, before her melt!
 Her love ye hailed—her wrath have felt!
 But She through many a change of form
 hath gone,
 And stands amidst you now an armed
 creature,
 Whose panoply is not a thing put on,
 But the live scales of a portentous nature;
 That, having forced its way from birth to
 birth,
 Stalks round—abhorred by Heaven, a
 terror to the Earth!

¹ Written after the overthrow of Prussia in the
 battle of Jena, October 14, 1806.—ED.

II

I marked the breathings of her dragon
 crest:
 My Soul, a sorrowful interpreter,
 In many a midnight vision bowed
 Before the ominous aspect of her spear;
 Whether the mighty beam, in scorn up-
 held,
 Threatened her foes,—or, pompously at
 rest,
 Seemed to bisect her orb'd shield,
 As stretches a blue bar of solid cloud
 Across the setting sun and all the fiery
 west.

III

So did she daunt the Earth, and God
 defy!
 And, wheresoe'er she spread her sove-
 reignty,
 Pollution tainted all that was most pure.
 —Have we not known—and live we not
 to tell—
 That Justice seemed to hear her final
 knell?
 Faith buried deeper in her own deep
 breast
 Her stores, and sighed to find them
 insecure!
 And Hope was maddened by the drops
 that fell
 From shades, her chosen place of short-
 lived rest.
 Shame followed shame, and woe sup-
 planted woe—
 Is this the only change that time can show?
 How long shall vengeance sleep? Ye
 patient Heavens, how long?
 —Infirm ejaculation! from the tongue
 Of Nations wanting virtue to be strong
 Up to the measure of accorded might,
 And daring not to feel the majesty of
 right!

IV

Weak Spirits are there—who would ask,
 Upon the pressure of a painful thing,
 The lion's sinews, or the eagle's wing;
 Or let their wishes loose, in forest-glade,
 Among the lurking powers
 Of herbs and lowly flowers,
 Or seek, from saints above, miraculous
 aid—
 That Man may be accomplished for a task
 Which his own nature hath enjoined;—
 and why?
 If, when that interference hath relieved
 him,
 He must sink down to languish
 In worse than former helplessness—and lie
 Till the caves roar,—and imbecility
 Again engendering anguish,
 The same weak wish returns, that had
 before deceived him.

POEMS DEDICATED TO NATIONAL

V

But Thou, supreme Disposer! may'st
not speed
The course of things, and change the
creed
Which hath been held aloft before men's
sight
Since the first framing of societies,
Whether, as bards have told in ancient
song,
Built up by soft seducing harmonies;
Or prest together by the appetite,
And by the power, of wrong.

PART II

I

ON A CELEBRATED EVENT IN ANCIENT HISTORY¹

[Composed (?).—Published 1815.]

A ROMAN Master stands on Grecian
ground,
And to the people at the Isthmian Games
Assembled, He, by a herald's voice, pro-
claims
THE LIBERTY OF GREECE:—the words
rebound
Until all voices in one voice are drowned;
Glad acclamation by which air was rent!
And birds, high flying in the element,
Dropped to the earth, astonished at the
sound!
Yet were the thoughtful grieved; and
still that voice
Haunts, with sad echoes, musing Fancy's
ear:
Ah! that a *Conqueror's* words should be
so dear:
Ah! that a *boon* could shed such rapturous
joys!
A gift of that which is not to be given
By all the blended powers of Earth and
Heaven.

II

UPON THE SAME EVENT

[Composed (?).—Published 1815.]

WHEN, far and wide, swift as the beams
of morn
The tidings passed of servitude repealed,
And of that joy which shook the Isthmian
Field,
The rough Ætolians smiled with bitter
scorn.
"Tis known," cried they, "that he, who
would adorn
His envied temples with the Isthmian
crown,

¹ i.e. the proclamation of the Liberty of Greece by
T. Quintus Flaminius, the conqueror of Philip of
Macedon (B.C. 196).—Ed.

Must either win, through effort of his own,
The prize, or be content to see it worn
By more deserving brows.—Yet so ye prop,
Sons of the brave who fought at Ma-
rathon,
Your feeble spirits! Greece her head hath
bowed,
As if the wreath of liberty thereon
Would fix itself as smoothly as a cloud,
Which, at Jove's will, descends on Pe-
lion's top.'

III

TO THOMAS CLARKSON, ON THE FINAL PASS- ING OF THE BILL FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE. MARCH, 1807

[Composed March, 1807.—Published 1807.]

CLARKSON! it was an obstinate hill to
climb:
How toilsome—nay, how dire—it was, by
thee
Is known; by none, perhaps, so feelingly:
But thou, who, starting in thy fervent
prime,
Didst first lead forth that enterprise sub-
lime,
Hast heard the constant Voice its charge
repeat,
Which, out of thy young heart's oracular
seat,
First roused thee.—O true yoke-fellow
of Time,
Duty's intrepid liegeman, see, the palm
Is won, and by all Nations shall be worn!
The blood-stained Writing is for ever torn;
And thou henceforth wilt have a good
man's calm,
A great man's happiness; thy zeal shall
find
Repose at length, firm friend of human
kind!

IV

A PROPHECY

FEBRUARY, 1807

[Composed 1807.—Published 1807.]

HIGH deeds, O Germans, are to come
from you!
Thus in your books the record shall be
found,
'A watchword was pronounced, a potent
sound—
ARMINIUS!—all the people quaked like dew
Stirred by the breeze; they rose, a Nation,
true,
True to herself—the mighty Germany,
She of the Danube and the Northern Sea,
She rose, and off at once the yoke she
threw.
All power was given her in the dreadful
trance;

INDEPENDENCE AND LIBERTY

VII

COMPOSED WHILE THE AUTHOR WAS ENGAGED IN WRITING A TRACT OCCASIONED BY THE CONVENTION OF CINTRA

[Composed November or December, 1808.—Published 1815.]

Those new-born Kings¹ she withered like
a flame.¹⁰
—Woe to them all! but heaviest woe and
shame
To that Bavarian who could first advance
His banner in accursed league with
France,
First open traitor to the German name!

V

COMPOSED BY THE SIDE OF GRASMERE
LAKE

[Composed 1807.—Published 1819.]

CLOUDS, lingering yet, extend in solid bars
Through the grey west; and lo! these
waters, steeled
By breezeless air to smoothest polish,
yield
A vivid repetition of the stars;⁴
Jove, Venus, and the ruddy crest of Mars
Amid his fellows beauteously revealed
At happy distance from earth's groaning
field,
Where ruthless mortals wage incessant
wars.
Is it a mirror?—or the nether Sphere
Opening to view the abyss in which she
feeds¹⁰
Her own calm fires?—But list! a voice
is near;
Great Pan himself low-whispering through
the reeds,
'Be thankful, thou; for, if unholy deeds
Ravage the world, tranquillity is here!'

VI

[Composed (?).—Published 1827.]

Go back to antique ages, if thine eyes
The genuine mien and character would
trace
Of the rash Spirit that still holds her place,
Prompting the world's audacious vanities!
Go back, and see the Tower of Babel rise;
The pyramid extend its monstrous base,
For some Aspirant of our short-lived race,
Anxious an aery name to immortalize.
There, too, ere wiles and politic dispute
Gave specious colouring to aim and act,
See the first mighty Hunter leave the
brute—¹¹
To chase mankind, with men in armies
packed
For his field-pastime high and absolute,
While, to dislodge his game, cities are
sacked!

¹ i.e. the heads of twelve sovereign houses of the Empire who, by treaty signed at Paris (July 12, 1806) declared themselves finally severed from Germany, and united into the Confederation of the Rhine under the Protectorate of Napoleon. The *Bavarian* (line 12) was Frederick Augustus, Elector of Saxony, with whom Napoleon (Dec. 11, 1806) concluded a treaty admitting him into the Confederation of the Rhine.—Ed.

NOT 'mid the World's vain objects that
enslave
The free-born Soul—that World whose
vaunted skill
In selfish interest perverts the will,
Whose factions lead astray the wise and
brave—
Not there; but in dark wood and rocky
cave,⁵
And hollow vale which foaming torrents
fill
With omnipresent murmur as they rave
Down their steep beds, that never shall
be still:
Here, mighty Nature! in this school
sublime
I weigh the hopes and fears of suffering
Spain;¹⁰
For her consult the auguries of time,
And through the human heart explore
my way;
And look and listen—gathering, whence
I may,
Triumph, and thoughts no bondage can
restrain.

VIII

COMPOSED AT THE SAME TIME AND ON THE
SAME OCCASION

[Composed November or December, 1808.—Published 1815.]

I DROPPED my pen; and listened to the
Wind
That sang of trees up-torn and vessels
tost—
A midnight harmony; and wholly lost
To the general sense of men by chains
confined
Of business, care, or pleasure; or re-
signed⁵
To timely sleep. Thought I, the impas-
sioned strain,
Which, without aid of numbers, I sus-
tain,
Like acceptance from the World will find.
Yet some with apprehensive ear shall
drink
A dirge devoutly breathed o'er sorrows
past;¹⁰
And to the attendant promise will give
heed—
The prophecy,—like that of this wild blast,
Which, while it makes the heart with sad-
ness shrink,
Tells also of bright calms that shall
succeed.

POEMS DEDICATED TO NATIONAL

IX HOFER¹

[Composed 1809.—Published Oct. 26, 1809 (*The Friend*); 1815.]

OF mortal parents is the Hero born
By whom the undaunted Tyrolese are led?
Or is it Tell's great Spirit, from the dead
Returned to animate an age forlorn?
He comes like Phœbus through the gates
of morn 5
When dreary darkness is discomfited,
Yet mark his modest state! upon his head,
That simple crest, a heron's plume, is worn.
O Liberty! they stagger at the shock
From van to rear—and with one mind
would flee, 10
But half their host is buried:—rock on
rock
Descends:—beneath this godlike War-
rior, see!
Hills, torrents, woods, embodied to bemock
The Tyrant, and confound his cruelty.

X

[Composed 1809.—Published October 26, 1809 (*The Friend*); 1815.]

ADVANCE—come forth from thy Tyrolean
ground,
Dear Liberty! stern Nymph of soul un-
tamed;
Sweet Nymph, O rightly of the moun-
tains named!
Through the long chain of Alps from
mound to mound
And o'er the eternal snows, like Echo,
bound; 5
Like Echo, when the hunter train at dawn
Have roused her from her sleep: and
forest-lawn,
Cliffs, woods and caves, her viewless steps
resound
And babble of her pastime!—On, dread
Power!
With such invisible motion speed thy flight,
Through hanging clouds, from craggy
height to height, 11
Through the green vales and through the
herdman's bower—
That all the Alps may gladden in thy might,
Here, there, and in all places at one hour.

XI

FEELINGS OF THE TYROLESE

[Composed 1809.—Published December 21, 1809 (*The Friend*); 1815.]

THE Land we from our fathers had in
trust,
And to our children will transmit, or die;
This is our maxim, this our plety;

¹ Andreas Hofer, an innkeeper, led the Tyrolese for a time successfully, but was defeated by the Bavarians in October 1809, and tried by court-martial and shot in 1810.—Ed.

And God and Nature say that it is just.
That which we *would* perform in arms—
we must!

We read the dictate in the infant's eye;
In the wife's smile; and in the placid sky;
And, at our feet, amid the silent dust
Of them that were before us.—Sing aloud
Old songs, the precious music of the
heart! 10
Give, herds and flocks, your voices to the
wind!

While we go forth, a self-devoted crowd,
With weapons grasped in fearless hands,
to assert

Our virtue, and to vindicate mankind.

XII

[Composed 1809.—Published November 16, 1809 (*The Friend*); 1815.]

ALAS! what boots the long laborious quest
Of moral prudence, sought through good
and ill;
Or pains abstruse—to elevate the will,
And lead us on to that transcendent rest
Where every passion shall the sway attest
Of Reason, seated on her sovereign hill;
What is it but a vain and curious skill,
If sapient Germany must lie deprest,
Beneath the brutal sword?—Her haughty
Schools
Shall blush; and may not we with sorrow
say, 10
A few strong instincts and a few plain rules,
Among the herdsmen of the Alps, have
wrought
More for mankind at this unhappy day
Than all the pride of intellect and thought?

XIII

[Composed 1809.—Published December 21, 1809 (*The Friend*); 1815.]

AND is it among rude untutored Dales,
There, and there only, that the heart is
true?
And, rising to repel or to subdue,
Is it by rocks and woods that man prevails?
Ah no! though Nature's dread protection
fails, 5
There is a bulwark in the soul. This knew
Iberian Burghers when the sword they
drew
In Zaragoza, naked to the gales
Of fiercely-breathing war. The truth was
felt
By Palafox, and many a brave compeer,
Like him of noble birth and noble mind;
By ladies, meek-eyed women without
fear; 12
And wanderers of the street, to whom is
dealt
The bread which without industry they
find.

XIV

[Composed 1809.—Published December 21, 1809
(*The Friend*); 1815.]

O'ER the wide earth, on mountain and on
plain,
Dwells in the affections and the soul of
man
A Godhead, like the universal PAN;
But more exalted, with a brighter train:
And shall his bounty be dispensed in
vain,
Showered equally on city and on field,
And neither hope nor steadfast promise
yield

In these usurping times of fear and pain?
Such doom awaits us. Nay, forbid it
Heaven!

We know the arduous strife, the eternal
laws

To which the triumph of all good is given,
High sacrifice, and labour without pause,
Even to the death:—else wherefore should
the eye

Of man converse with immortality?

XV

ON THE FINAL SUBMISSION OF THE TYROLESE

[Composed 1809.—Published December 21, 1809
(*The Friend*); 1815.]

It was a *moral* end for which they fought;
Else how, when mighty Thrones were put
to shame,

Could they, poor Shepherds, have pre-
served an aim,

A resolution, or enlivening thought?

Nor hath that moral good been *vainly*
sought;

For in their magnanimity and fame
Powers have they left, an impulse, and a
claim

Which neither can be overturned nor
bought.

Sleep, Warriors, sleep! among your hills
repose!

We know that ye, beneath the stern
control

Of awful prudence, keep the unvan-
quished soul:

And when, impatient of her guilt and
woes,

Europe breaks forth; then, Shepherds!
shall ye rise

For perfect triumph o'er your Enemies.

XVI

[Composed 1809.—Published 1815.]

HAIL, Zaragoza! If with unwet eye
We can approach, thy sorrow to behold,
Yet is the heart not pitiless nor cold;
Such spectacle demands not tear or sigh.
These desolate remains are trophies high

INDEPENDENCE AND LIBERTY

Of more than martial courage in the breast
Of peaceful civic virtue: they attest
Thy matchless worth to all posterity.
Blood flowed before thy sight without
remorse;

Disease consumed thy vitals; War up-
heaved

The ground beneath thee with volcanic
force:

Dread trials! yet encountered and sus-
tained

Till not a wreck of help or hope remained,
And law was from necessity received.¹

XVII

[Composed 1809 (?).—Published 1815.]

SAY, what is Honour?—'Tis the finest
sense

Of justice which the human mind can
frame,

Intent each lurking frailty to disclaim,
And guard the way of life from all offence

Suffered or done. When lawless violence
Invades a Realm, so pressed that in the
scale

Of perilous war her weightiest armies fail,
Honour is hopeful elevation,—whence
Glory, and triumph. Yet with politic skill

Endangered States may yield to terms
unjust;

Stoop their proud heads, but not unto
the dust—

A Foe's most favourite purpose to fulfil:
Happy occasions oft by self-mistrust

Are forfeited; but infamy doth kill.

XVIII²

[Composed October or November, 1809.—
Published 1815.]

THE martial courage of a day is vain,
An empty noise of death the battle's roar,

If vital hope be wanting to restore,
Or fortitude be wanting to sustain,

Armies or kingdoms. We have heard a
strain

Of triumph, how the labouring Danube
bore

A weight of hostile corpses: drenched with
gore

Were the wide fields, the hamlets heaped
with slain.

Yet see (the mighty tumult overpast)
Austria a Daughter of her Throne hath

sold!

And her Tyrolean Champion we behold
Murdered, like one ashore by shipwreck
cast,

Murdered without relief. Oh! blind as bold,
To think that such assurance can stand
fast!

¹ Zaragoza surrendered February 20, 1809.—Ed.

² Written apparently on the occasion of the Peace
of Vienna, signed Oct. 10, 1809.—Ed.

POEMS DEDICATED TO NATIONAL

XIX

[Composed after May, 1809.—Published 1815.]

BRAVE Schill! by death delivered, take
thy flight
From Prussia's timid region. Go, and rest
With heroes, 'mid the islands of the Blest,
Or in the fields of empyrean light.
A meteor wert thou crossing a dark
night:
Yet shall thy name, conspicuous and
sublime,
Stand in the spacious firmament of time,
Fixed as a star: such glory is thy right.
Alas! it may not be: for earthly fame
Is Fortune's frail dependant; yet there
lives
A Judge, who, as man claims by merit,
gives;
To whose all-pondering mind a noble aim,
Faithfully kept, is as a noble deed;
In whose pure sight all virtue doth suc-
ceed.

XX

[Composed 1809.—Published 1815.]

CALL not the royal Swede¹ unfortunate,
Who never did to Fortune bend the knee;
Who slighted fear; rejected steadfastly
Temptation; and whose kingly name and
state
Have 'perished by his choice, and not
his fate!'⁵
Hence lives He, to his inner self endeared;
And hence, wherever virtue is revered,
He sits a more exalted Potentate,
Throned in the hearts of men. Should
Heaven ordain
That this great Servant of a righteous
cause¹⁰
Must still have sad or vexing thoughts to
endure,
Yet may a sympathising spirit pause,
Admonished by these truths, and quench
all pain
In thankful joy and gratulation pure.

XXI

[Composed 1809.—Published 1815.]

LOOK now on that Adventurer who hath
paid
His vows to Fortune; who, in cruel
slight
Of virtuous hope, of liberty, and right,
Hath followed wheresoe'er a way was
made
By the blind Goddess,—ruthless, undis-
mayed;⁵

¹ Killed at Stralsund, May 31, 1809.—Ed.

² Gustavus IV (see Part I, Sonnet vii) abdicated early in 1809. In this and the following Sonnet he is contrasted with Napoleon. See Wordsworth's note to Sonnet vii, Part I of this series.—Ed.

And so hath gained at length a prosper-
ous height,
Round which the elements of worldly
might
Beneath his haughty feet, like clouds, are
laid.
O joyless power that stands by lawless
force!
Curses are his dire portion, scorn, and
hate,¹⁰
Internal darkness and unquiet breath;
And, if old judgments keep their sacred
course,
Him from that height shall Heaven pre-
cipitate
By violent and ignominious death.

XXII

[Composed probably 1809.—Published 1815.]

Is there a power that can sustain and
cheer
The captive chieftain, by a tyrant's doom,
Forced to descend into his destined
tomb—
A dungeon dark! where he must waste
the year,
And lie cut off from all his heart holds
dear;⁵
What time his injured country is a stage
Whereon deliberate Valour and the rage
Of righteous Vengeance side by side ap-
pear,
Filling from morn to night the heroic scene
With deeds of hope and everlasting
praise:—¹⁰
Say can he think of this with mind serene
And silent fetters? Yes, if visions bright
Shine on his soul, reflected from the days
When he himself was tried in open light.

XXIII

1810

[Composed 1810.—Published 1815.]

AH! where is Palafox¹? Nor tongue nor
pen
Reports of him, his dwelling or his grave!
Does yet the unheard-of vessel ride the
wave?
Or is she swallowed up, remote from ken
Of pitying human nature? Once again⁵
Methinks that we shall hail thee, Cham-
pion brave,
Redeemed to baffle that imperial Slave,

¹ Don Joseph Palafox-y-Melzi (1780–1847), famed for his stubborn defence of Saragossa, on the surrender of that fortress by the general to whom, owing to illness, he had been compelled to resign the command, was taken prisoner (February, 1809) and sent to Vincennes, where he was detained for nearly five years. On the restoration of Ferdinand VII he was sent back to Madrid, and in 1814 was appointed Captain-General of Aragon; but soon after retired into private life, from which he never again emerged.

—Ed

INDEPENDENCE AND LIBERTY

And through all Europe cheer desponding
men
With new-born hope. Unbounded is the
might
Of martyrdom, and fortitude, and right.
Hark, how thy Country triumphs!—
Smilingly
The Eternal looks upon her sword that
gleams,
Like his own lightning, over mountains
high,
On rampart, and the banks of all her
streams.

XXIV

[Composed 1810.—Published 1815.]

In due observance of an ancient rite,
The rude Biscayans, when their children
lie
Dead in the sinless time of infancy,
Attire the peaceful corse in vestments
white;
And, in like sign of cloudless triumph
bright,
They bind the unoffending creature's
brows
With happy garlands of the pure white
rose:
Then do a festal company unite
In choral song; and, while the uplifted
cross
Of Jesus goes before, the child is borne
Uncovered to his grave: 'tis closed,—her
loss
The Mother *then* mourns, as she needs
must mourn;
But soon, through Christian faith, is grief
subdued:
And joy returns, to brighten fortitude.

XXV

FEELINGS OF A NOBLE BISCAYAN AT ONE OF
THOSE FUNERALS

1810

[Composed 1810.—Published 1815.]

YET, yet, Biscayans! we must meet our
Foes
With firmer soul, yet labour to regain
Our ancient freedom: else 'twere worse
than vain
To gather round the bier these festal
shows.
A garland fashioned of the pure white
rose
Becomes not one whose father is a slave:
Oh, bear the infant covered to his grave!
These venerable mountains now enclose
A people sunk in apathy and fear.
If this endure, farewell, for us, all good!
The awful light of heavenly innocence

Will fail to illuminate the infant's bier;
And guilt and shame, from which is no
defence,
Descend on all that issues from our blood.

XXVI

THE OAK OF GUERNICA

[Composed 1810.—Published 1815.]

The ancient oak of Guernica, says Laborde in his account of Biscay, is a most venerable natural monument. Ferdinand and Isabella, in the year 1476, after hearing Mass in the church of Santa Maria de la Antigua, repaired to this tree, under which they swore to the Biscayans to maintain their *fueros* (privileges). What other interest belongs to it in the minds of this people will appear from the following.

SUPPOSED ADDRESS TO THE SAME. 1810

OAK of Guernica! Tree of holier power
Than that which in Dodona did enshrine
(So faith too fondly deemed) a voice di-
vine
Heard from the depths of its aerial
bower—
How canst thou flourish at this blighting
hour?
What hope, what joy can sunshine bring
to thee,
Or the soft breezes from the Atlantic sea,
The dews of morn, or April's tender
shower?
Stroke merciful and welcome would that
be
Which should extend thy branches on the
ground,
If never more within their shady round
Those lofty-minded Lawgivers shall meet,
Peasant and lord, in their appointed seat,
Guardians of Biscay's ancient liberty.

XXVII

INDIGNATION OF A HIGH-MINDED
SPANIARD

1810

[Composed 1810.—Published 1815.]

We can endure that He should waste our
lands,
Despoil our temples, and by sword and
flame
Return us to the dust from which we
came;
Such food a Tyrant's appetite demands;
And we can brook the thought that by
his hands
Spain may be overpowered, and he
possess,
For his delight, a solemn wilderness
Where all the brave lie dead. But, when
of bands
Which he will break for us he dares to
speak,

POEMS DEDICATED TO NATIONAL

Of benefits, and of a future day ¹⁰
 When our enlightened minds shall bless
 his sway;
 Then, the strained heart of fortitude
 proves weak;
 Our groans, our blushes, our pale cheeks
 declare
 That he has power to inflict what we lack
 strength to bear.

XXVIII

[Composed probably 1810.—Published 1815.]

AVAUNT all specious pliancy of mind
 In men of low degree, all smooth pretence!
 I better like a blunt indifference,
 And self-respecting slowness, disinclined
 To win me at first sight: and be there
 joined ⁵
 Patience and temperance with this high
 reserve,
 Honour that knows the path and will not
 swerve;
 Affections which, if put to proof, are kind;
 And piety towards God. Such men of old
 Were England's native growth; and
 throughout Spain ¹⁰
 (Thanks to high God) forests of such re-
 main:
 Then for that Country let our hopes be
 bold;
 For matched with these shall policy prove
 vain,
 Her arts, her strength, her iron, and her
 gold.

XXIX

1810

[Composed 1810.—Published 1815.]

O'ERWEENING Statesmen have full long
 relied
 On fleets and armies, and external wealth:
 But from *within* proceeds a Nation's
 health;
 Which shall not fail, though poor men
 cleave with pride
 To the paternal floor; or turn aside, ⁵
 In the thronged city, from the walks of gain,
 As being all unworthy to detain
 A Soul by contemplation sanctified.
 There are who cannot languish in this
 strife,
 Spaniards of every rank, by whom the
 good ¹⁰
 Of such high course was felt and under-
 stood;
 Who to their Country's cause have bound
 a life
 Erewhile, by solemn consecration, given
 To labour, and to prayer, to nature, and
 to heaven.¹

¹ See Laborde's character of the Spanish people; from him the sentiment of these last two lines is taken.

XXX

THE FRENCH AND THE SPANISH GUERRILLAS
 [Composed 1810 or 1811.—Published 1815.]

HUNGER, and sultry heat, and nipping
 blast
 From bleak hill-top, and length of march
 by night
 Through heavy swamp, or over snow-clad
 height—
 These hardships ill-sustained, these dan-
 gers past,
 The roving Spanish Bands are reached at
 last, ⁵
 Charged, and dispersed like foam: but as
 a flight
 Of scattered quails by signs do reunite,
 So these,—and, heard of once again, are
 chased
 With combinations of long-practised art
 And newly-kindled hope; but they are
 fled— ¹⁰
 Gone are they, viewless as the buried
 dead:
 Where now?—Their sword is at the Foe-
 man's heart!
 And thus from year to year his walk they
 thwart,
 And hang like dreams around his guilty
 bed.

XXXI

SPANISH GUERRILLAS

1811

[Composed 1811.—Published 1815.]

THEY seek, are sought; to daily battle led,
 Shrink not, though far outnumbered by
 their Foes,
 For they have learnt to open and to close
 The ridges of grim war; and at their head
 Are captains such as erst their country
 bred ⁵
 Or fostered, self-supported chiefs,—like
 those
 Whom hardy Rome was fearful to oppose;
 Whose desperate shock the Carthaginian
 fled.
 In One who lived unknown a shepherd's
 life
 Redoubted Viriathus breathes again; ¹⁰
 And Mina,¹ nourished in the studious
 shade,
 With that great Leader vies, who, sick of
 strife
 And bloodshed, longed in quiet to be laid
 In some green island of the western main.

¹ Don Espres y Mina, leader of the Guerrillas of Navarre, had been educated for the priesthood. The 'great Leader' (l. 12) is the Roman general Sertorius, whose romantic story profoundly stirred Wordsworth's imagination (see *Prelude* l. ii. 190-202). Viriathus (l. 10), the renowned shepherd-leader of the Lusitanians against the arms of Rome.—Ed.

XXXII

1811

[Composed 1811.—Published 1815.]

THE power of Armies is a visible thing,
 Formal, and circumscribed in time and
 space;
 But who the limits of that power shall
 trace
 Which a brave People into light can bring
 Or hide, at will,—for freedom combating
 By just revenge inflamed? No foot may
 chase,
 No eye can follow, to a fatal place
 That power, that spirit, whether on the
 wing
 Like the strong wind, or sleeping like the
 wind
 Within its awful caves.—From year to
 year
 Springs this indigenous produce far and
 near;
 No craft this subtle element can bind,
 Rising like water from the soil, to find
 In every nook a lip that it may cheer.

XXXIII

1811

[Composed 1811.—Published 1815.]

HERE pause: the poet claims at least this
 praise,
 That virtuous Liberty hath been the scope
 Of his pure song, which did not shrink
 from hope
 In the worst moment of these evil days;
 From hope, the paramount duty that
 Heaven lays,
 For its own honour, on man's suffering
 heart.
 Never may from our souls one truth de-
 part—
 That an accursed thing it is to gaze
 On prosperous tyrants with a dazzled eye;
 Nor—touched with due abhorrence of
 their guilt
 For whose dire ends tears flow, and blood
 is spilt,
 And justice labours in extremity—
 Forget thy weakness, upon which is built,
 O wretched man, the throne of tyranny!

XXXIV

THE FRENCH ARMY IN RUSSIA

1812-13

[Composed Feb., 1816.—Published: vol. of 1816.]

HUMANITY, delighting to behold
 A fond reflection of her own decay,
 Hath painted Winter like a traveller old,
 Propped on a staff, and, through the
 sullen day,

INDEPENDENCE AND LIBERTY

In hooded mantle, limping o'er the plain,
 As though his weakness were disturbed
 by pain:

Or, if a juster fancy should allow
 An undisputed symbol of command,
 The chosen sceptre is a withered bough,
 Infirmly grasped within a palsied hand.
 These emblems suit the helpless and for-
 lorn,
 But mighty Winter the device shall scorn.

For he it was—dread Winter! who beset,
 Flinging round van and rear his ghastly
 net,

That host, when from the regions of the
 Pole

They shrunk, insane ambition's barren
 goal—

That host, as huge and strong as e'er
 defied

Their God, and placed their trust in
 human pride!

As fathers persecute rebellious sons,
 He smote the blossoms of their warrior
 youth;

He called on Frost's inexorable tooth
 Life to consume in Manhood's firmest
 hold;

Nor spared the reverend blood that feebly
 runs;

For why—unless for liberty enrolled
 And sacred home—ah! why should hoary
 Age be bold?

Fleet the Tartar's reinless steed,
 But fleetier far the pinions of the Wind,
 Which from Siberian caves the Monarch

freed,
 And sent him forth, with squadrons of his
 kind,

And bade the Snow their ample backs
 bestride,

And to the battle ride.
 No pitying voice commands a halt,

No courage can repel the dire assault;
 Distracted, spiritless, benumbed, and
 blind,

Whole legions sink—and, in one instant,
 find

Burial and death: look for them—and
 descry,

When morn returns, beneath the clear
 blue skv,

A soundless waste, a trackless vacancy!

XXXV

ON THE SAME OCCASION

[Composed 1816.—Published 1816.]

YE Storms, resound the praises of your
 King!

And ye mild Seasons—in a sunny clime,
 Midway on some high hill, while father
 Time

Looks on delighted—meet in festal ring,

POEMS DEDICATED TO NATIONAL

And loud and long of Winter's triumph
sing!

Sing ye, with blossoms crowned, and
fruits, and flowers,

Of Winter's breath surcharged with sleety
showers,

And the dire flapping of his hoary wing!
Knit the blithe dance upon the soft green

grass;
With feet, hands, eyes, looks, lips, report
your gain;

Whisper it to the billows of the main,
And to the aerial zephyrs as they pass,

That old decrepit Winter—*He* hath slain
That Host, which rendered all your boun-

ties vain!

XXXVI

[Composed November or December, 1822.—
Published 1827.]

By Moscow self-devoted to a blaze
Of dreadful sacrifice; by Russian blood

Lavished in fight with desperate hardi-
hood;

The unfeeling Elements no claim shall
raise

To rob our Human-nature of just praise
For what she did and suffered. Pledges

sure
Of a deliverance absolute and pure
She gave, if Faith might tread the beaten

ways
Of Providence. But now did the Most
High

Exalt his still small voice;—to quell that
Host

Gathered his power, a manifest ally;
He, whose heaped waves confounded the

proud boast
Of Pharaoh, said to Famine, Snow, and
Frost,

'Finish the strife by deadliest victory!'

XXXVII

THE GERMANS ON THE HEIGHTS OF
HOCHHEIM

[Composed 1820.—Published 1822 (*Memorials of
a Tour, &c.*)]

ABRUPTLY paused the strife;—the field
throughout

Resting upon his arms each warrior stood,
Checked in the very act and deed of blood,

With breath suspended, like a listening
scout.

O Silence! thou wert mother of a shout
That through the texture of yon azure

dome
Cleaves its glad way, a cry of harvest

home
Uttered to Heaven in ecstasy devout!
The barrier Rhine hath flashed, through

battle-smoke,

On men who gaze heart-smitten by the
view,

As if all Germany had felt the shock!
—Fly, wretched Gauls! ere they the

charge renew
Who have seen—themselves now casting
off the yoke—

The unconquerable Stream his course
pursue.

XXXVIII

NOVEMBER, 1813

[Composed November, 1813.—Published 1815.]

Now that all hearts are glad, all faces
bright,

Our aged Sovereign sits, to the ebb and
flow

Of states and kingdoms, to their joy or
woe,

Insensible. He sits deprived of sight,
And lamentably wrapped in twofold

night,
Whom no weak hopes deceived; whose
mind ensued,

Through perilous war, with regal fortitude,
Peace that should claim respect from law-

less Might.
Dread King of Kings, vouchsafe a ray
divine

To his forlorn condition! let thy grace
Upon his inner soul in mercy shine;

Permit his heart to kindle, and to embrace
(Though it were only for a moment's

space)
The triumphs of this hour¹; for they are
THINE!

XXXIX

ODE

1814

[Composed Jan., 1816.—Published: vol. of 1816.]

—Carmina possumus

Donare, et pretium dicere muneris.

Non incisa notis marmora publicis,

Per quae spiritus et vita redit bonis

Post mortem dulbus,

Laudes, quam—clarius indicant

Laudes, quam—Pierides; neque,

Si chartae sileant quod bene feceris,

Mercedem tuleris.—HOR. CAR. 8. LIB. 4. 11 sq.

I

WHEN the soft hand of sleep had closed
the latch

On the tired household of corporeal sense,
And Fancy, keeping unreluctant watch,

Was free her choicest favours to dispense;
I saw, in wondrous perspective displayed,

A landscape more august than happiest
skill

Of pencil ever clothed with light and shade;
¹ i.e. the final overthrow of Napoleon at Leipzig,
Oct. 16–19, 1813.—ED.

INDEPENDENCE AND LIBERTY

II

An intermingled pomp of vale and hill,
City, and naval stream, suburban grove,
And stately forest where the wild deer
rove;

Nor wanted lurking hamlet, dusky towns,
And scattered rural farms of aspect
bright;

And, here and there, between the pas-
toral downs,

The azure sea upswelled upon the sight.
Fair prospect, such as Britain only
shows!

But not a living creature could be seen
Through its wide circuit, that, in deep
repose,

And, even to sadness, lonely and serene,
Lay hushed; till—through a portal in
the sky

Brighter than brightest loop-hole, in a
storm,

Opening before the sun's triumphant
eye—

Issued, to sudden view, a glorious Form!
Earthward it glided with a swift descent:
Saint George himself this Visitant must
be;

And, ere a thought could ask on what
intent

He sought the regions of humanity,
A thrilling voice was heard, that vivified
City and field and flood;—aloud it cried—

'Though from my celestial home,
Like a Champion, armed I come;
On my helm the dragon crest,
And the red cross on my breast;
I, the Guardian of this Land,
Speak not now of toilsome duty;
Well obeyed was that command—

Whence bright days of festive beauty;
Haste, Virgins, haste!—the flowers which
summer gave

Have perished in the field;
But the green thickets plenteously shall
yield

Fit garlands for the brave,
That will be welcome, if by you en-
twined;

Haste, Virgins, haste; and you, ye Ma-
trons grave,

Go forth with rival youthfulness of mind,
And gather what ye find

Of hardy laurel and wild holly boughs—
To deck your stern Defenders' modest
brows!

Such simple gifts prepare,
Though they have gained a worthier
meed,

And in due time shall share
Those palms and amaranthine wreaths

Unto their martyred Countrymen de-
creed,

In realms where everlasting freshness
breathes!

And lo! with crimson banners proudly
streaming,

And upright weapons innocently gleam-
ing,

Along the surface of a spacious plain
Advance in order the redoubted Bands,

And there receive green chaplets from the
hands

Of a fair female train—
Maids and Matrons, dight

In robes of dazzling white;

While from the crowd bursts forth a
rapturous noise

By the cloud-capt hills retorted;
And a throng of rosy boys

In loose fashion tell their joys;
And grey-haired sires, on staffs sup-
ported,

Look round, and by their smiling seem to
say,

'Thus strives a grateful Country to
display

The mighty debt which nothing can
repay!'

III

Anon before my sight a palace rose
Built of all precious substances,—so pure

And exquisite, that sleep alone bestows
Ability like splendour to endure:

Entered, with streaming thousands,
through the gate,

I saw the banquet spread beneath a Dome
of state,

A lofty Dome, that dared to emulate
The heaven of sable night

With starry lustre; yet had power to
throw

Solemn effulgence, clear as solar light,
Upon a princely company below,

While the vault rang with choral har-
mony,

Like some Nymph-haunted grot beneath
the roaring sea.

—No sooner ceased that peal, than on the
verge

Of exultation hung a dirge
Breathed from a soft and lonely instru-
ment,

That kindled recollections
Of agonised affections;

And, though some tears the strain at-
tended,

The mournful passion ended
In peace of spirit, and sublime content!

IV

But garlands wither; festal shows de-
part,

Like dreams themselves; and sweetest
sound—

(Albeit of effect profound)
It was—and it is gone!

POEMS DEDICATED TO NATIONAL

Victorious England! bid the silent Art
 Reflect, in glowing hues that shall not
 fade,⁹⁵
 Those high achievements; even as she
 arrayed
 With second life the deed of Marathon
 Upon Athenian walls;
 So may she labour for thy civic halls:
 And be the guardian spaces¹⁰⁰
 Of consecrated places,
 As nobly graced by Sculpture's patient
 toil;
 And let imperishable Columns rise
 Fixed in the depths of this courageous
 soil;¹⁰⁴
 Expressive signals of a glorious strife,
 And competent to shed a spark divine
 Into the torpid breast of daily life;—
 Records on which, for pleasure of all eyes,
 The morning sun may shine
 With gratulation thoroughly benign! 110

V

And ye, Pierian Sisters, sprung from
 Jove
 And sage Mnemosyne,—full long de-
 barred
 From your first mansions, exiled all too
 long
 From many a hallowed stream and grove,
 Dear native regions where ye wont to
 rove,¹¹⁵
 Chanting for patriot heroes the reward
 Of never-dying song!
 Now (for, though Truth descending from
 above
 The Olympian summit hath destroyed for
 aye¹¹⁹
 Your kindred Deities, Ye live and move,
 Spared for obeisance from perpetual love,
 For privilege redeemed of godlike sway)
 Now, on the margin of some spotless
 fountain,
 Or top serene of unmolested mountain,
 Strike audibly the noblest of your lyres,
 And for a moment meet the soul's de-
 sires!¹²⁶
 That I, or some more favoured Bard, may
 hear
 What ye, celestial Maids! have often
 sung
 Of Britain's acts,—may catch it with rapt
 ear,
 And give the treasure to our British
 tongue!¹³⁰
 So shall the characters of that proud page
 Support their mighty theme from age
 to age;
 And, in the desert places of the earth,
 When they to future empires have given
 birth,
 So shall the people gather and believe
 The bold report, transferred to every
 clime;¹³⁶

And the whole world, not envious but
 admiring,
 And to the like aspiring,
 Own—that the progeny of this fair Isle
 Had power as lofty actions to achieve
 As were performed in man's heroic prime;
 Nor wanted, when their fortitude had held
 Its even tenor, and the foe was quelled,
 A corresponding virtue to beguile
 The hostile purpose of wide-wasting
 Time—¹⁴⁵
 That not in vain they laboured to secure,
 For their great deeds, perpetual memory,
 And fame as largely spread as land and
 sea,
 By Works of spirit high and passion pure!

XL

FEELINGS OF A FRENCH ROYALIST, ON THE
 DISINTERMENT OF THE REMAINS OF THE
 DUKE D'ENGHIEN.

[Composed 1816.—Published: vol. of 1816.]

DEAR Reliques! from a pit of vilest
 mould
 Uprisen—to lodge among ancestral kings;
 And to inflict shame's salutary stings
 On the remorseless hearts of men grown
 old
 In a blind worship; men perversely bold
 Even to this hour,—yet, some shall now
 forsake⁶
 Their monstrous Idol if the dead e'er
 spake,
 To warn the living; if truth were ever
 told
 By aught redeemed out of the hollow
 grave:
 O murdered Prince! meek, loyal, pious,
 brave!¹⁰
 The power of retribution once was given:
 But 'tis a rueful thought that willow bands
 So often tie the thunder-wielding hands
 Of Justice sent to earth from highest
 Heaven!

XLI

OCCASIONED BY THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO
 (The last six lines intended for an Inscription.)

FEBRUARY, 1816

[Composed 1816.—Published Feb. 4, 1816 (*The
 Champion*); vol. of 1816.]

INTREPID sons of Albion! not by you
 Is life despised; ah no, the spacious earth
 Ne'er saw a race who held, by right of
 birth,
 So many objects to which love is due:
 Ye slight not life—to God and Nature
 true;⁵
 But death, becoming death, is dearer far,
 When duty bids you bleed in open war:

INDEPENDENCE AND LIBERTY

Hence hath your prowess quelled that
impious crew.

Heroes!—for instant sacrifice prepared;
Yet filled with ardour and on triumph
bent

'Mid direst shocks of mortal accident—
To you who fell, and you whom slaughter
spared

To guard the fallen, and consummate the
event,

Your Country rears this sacred Monu-
ment!

XLII

SIEGE OF VIENNA RAISED BY JOHN
SOBIESKI

FEBRUARY, 1816

[Composed Jan., 1816.—Published Feb. 4, 1816
(*The Champion*); vol. of 1816.]

OH, for a kindling touch from that pure
flame

Which ministered, erewhile, to a sacrifice
Of gratitude, beneath Italian skies,

In words like these: 'Up, Voice of song!
proclaim

Thy saintly rapture with celestial aim: 5
For lo! the Imperial City stands released

From bondage threatened by the cru-
battled East,

And Christendom respires; from guilt
and shame

Redeemed, from miserable fear set free
By one day's feat, one mighty victory.

—Chant the Deliverer's praise in every
tongue! 11

The Cross shall spread, the Crescent hath
waxed dim;

He conquering, as in joyful Heaven is
sung,

HE CONQUERING THROUGH GOD, AND GOD
BY HIM'.¹

XLIII

OCCASIONED BY THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO
FEBRUARY, 1816

[Composed February, 1816.—Published: vol.
of 1816.]

THE Bard—whose soul is meek as dawn-
ing day,

Yet trained to judgments righteously
severe,

Fervid, yet conversant with holy fear,
As recognising one Almighty sway:

He—whose experienced eye can pierce
the array 5

Of past events; to whom, in vision clear,
The aspiring heads of future things

appear,
Like mountain-tops whose mists have
rolled away—

¹ See Fillicala's Ode.

Assailed from all encumbrance of our
time,¹

He only, if such breathe, in strains devout
Shall comprehend this victory sublime;

Shall worthily rehearse the hideous rout,
The triumph hail, which from their peace-
ful clime

Angels might welcome with a choral
shout!

XLIV

[Composed? (perhaps 1816).—Published 1827.]

EMPERORS and Kings, how oft have
temples rung

With impious thanksgiving, the Al-
mighty's scorn!

How oft above their altars have been
hung

Trophies that led the good and wise to
mourn 4

Triumphant wrong, battle of battle born,
And sorrow that to fruitless sorrow clung!

Now, from Heaven-sanctioned victory,
Peace is sprung;

In this firm hour Salvation lifts her horn.
Glory to arms! But, conscious that the
nerve

Of popular reason, long mistrusted, freed
Your thrones, ye Powers, from duty fear

to swerve! 11

Be just, be grateful; nor, the oppressor's
creed

Reviving, heavier chastisement deserve
Than ever forced unpitied hearts to bleed.

XLV

ODE

1815

[Composed 1816.—Published: volume of 1816.]

I

IMAGINATION—ne'er before content,
But aye ascending, restless in her pride

From all that martial feats could yield
To her desires, or to her hopes present—

Stooped to the Victory on that Belgic
field 5

Achieved, this closing deed magnificent,
And with the embrace was satisfied.

—Fly, ministers of Fame,
With every help that ye from earth and
heaven may claim!

Bear through the world these tidings of
delight! 10

—Hours, Days, and Months, have borne
them in the sight

Of mortals, hurrying like a sudden shower
That landward stretches from the sea,

The morning's splendours to devour;

¹ 'From all this world's encumbrance did himself
assail.'—SPENSER.

POEMS DEDICATED TO NATIONAL

But this swift travel scorns the company
Of irksome change, or threats from sad-
dening power. 16

—The shock is given—the Adversaries
bleed—

Lo, Justice triumphs! Earth is freed!
Joyful annunciation!—it went forth—

It pierced the caverns of the sluggish
North— 20

Of Andes—frozen gulfs became its
bridge—

The vast Pacific gladdens with the
freight—

Upon the Lakes of Asia 'tis bestowed—
The Arabian desert shapes a willing
road 25

Across her burning breast,
For this refreshing incense from the
West!—

—Where snakes and lions breed,
Where towns and cities thick as stars
appear,

Wherever fruits are gathered, and
where'er 30

The upturned soil receives the hopeful
seed—

While the Sun rules, and cross the shades
of night—

The unwearied arrow hath pursued its
flight!

The eyes of good men thankfully give heed,
And in its sparkling progress read

Of virtue crowned with glory's deathless
meed: 36

Tyrants exult to hear of kingdoms won,
And slaves are pleased to learn that
mighty feats are done;

Even the proud Realm, from whose dis-
tracted borders

This messenger of good was launched
in air, 40

France, humbled France, amid her wild
disorders,

Feels, and hereafter shall the truth
declare,

That she too lacks not reason to rejoice,
And utter England's name with sadly-
plausible voice.

II

O genuine glory, pure renown! 45
And well might it beseech that mighty

Town
Into whose bosom earth's best treasures
flow,

To whom all persecuted men retreat;
If a new Temple lift her votive brow

High on the shore of silver Thames—to
greet 50

The peaceful guest advancing from afar.
Bright be the Fabric, as a star

Fresh risen, and beautiful within!—there
meet

Dependence infinite, proportion just;
A Pile that Grace approves, and Time
can trust 55
With his most sacred wealth, heroic dust.

III

But if the valiant of this land
In reverential modesty demand,

That all observance, due to them, be paid
Where their serene progenitors are laid;

Kings, warriors, high-souled poets, saint-
like sages, 61

England's illustrious sons of long, long
ages;

Be it not unordained that solemn rites,
Within the circuit of those Gothic walls,

Shall be performed at pregnant intervals;
Commemoration holy that unites 66

The living generations with the dead;
By the deep soul-moving sense

Of religious eloquence,—
By visual pomp, and by the tie 70

Of sweet and threatening harmony;
Soft notes, awful as the omen

Of destructive tempests coming,
And escaping from that sadness

Into elevated gladness; 75
While the white-robed choir atten-

dant,
Under mouldering banners pendant,

Provoke all potent symphonies to raise
Songs of victory and praise,

For them who bravely stood unhurt, or
bled 80

With medicable wounds, or found their
graves

Upon the battle field, or under ocean's
waves;

Or were conducted home in single state,
And long procession—there to lie,

Where their sons' sons, and all posterity,
Unheard by them, their deeds shall

celebrate! 86

IV

Nor will the God of peace and love
Such martial service disapprove.

He guides the Pestilence—the cloud
Of locusts travels on his breath; 90

The region that in hope was ploughed
His drought consumes, his mildew taints

with death;
He springs the hushed Volcano's

mine.
He puts the Earthquake on her still design,

Darkens the sun, hath bade the forest sink,
And, drinking towns and cities, still can

drink 96
Cities and towns—'tis Thou—the work is

Thine!—
The fierce Tornado sleeps within Thy

courses—
He hears the word—he flies—

And navies perish in their ports; 100

INDEPENDENCE AND LIBERTY

For Thou art angry with Thine enemies!
 For these, and mourning for our
 errors,
 And sins, that point their terrors,
 We bow our heads before Thee, and we
 laud
 And magnify Thy name, Almighty God!
 But Man is Thy most awful instru-
 ment, 106
 In working out a pure intent;¹
 Thou cloth'st the wicked in their dazzling
 mail,
 And for Thy righteous purpose they
 prevail;
 Thine arm from peril guards the
 coasts 110
 Of them who in Thy laws delight:
 Thy presence turns the scale of doubtful
 fight,
 Tremendous God of battles, Lord of
 Hosts!

V

Forbear:—to Thee—
 Father and Judge of all, with fervent
 tongue, 115
 But in a gentler strain
 Of contemplation, by no sense of wrong
 (Too quick and keen) incited to disdain
 Of pity pleading from the heart in vain—
 To THEE—To THEE, 120
 Just God of christianised Humanity,
 Shall praises be poured forth, and thanks
 ascend,
 That Thou hast brought our warfare to
 an end,
 And that we need no second victory!
 Blest, above measure blest, 125
 If on Thy love our Land her hopes shall
 rest,
 And all the Nations labour to fulfil
 Thy law, and live henceforth in peace, in
 pure good will.

XLVI ODE

THE MORNING OF THE DAY APPOINTED FOR
 A GENERAL THANKSGIVING. JANUARY 18,
 1816.

[Composed January, 1816.—Published: vol. of
 1816.]

I

HAIL, orient Conqueror of gloomy Night!
 Thou that canst shed the bliss of gratitude
 On hearts howe'er insensible or rude;
 Whether thy punctual visitations smite
 The haughty towers where monarchs
 dwell; 5

¹ Lines 106, 107 were, in 1845, substituted for the
 four following lines at which many had stumbled:—

"But Thy most dreaded instrument,
 In working out a pure intent,
 Is Man—arrayed for mutual slaughter,
 —Yea, Carnage is thy daughter!"—ED.

Or thou, impartial Sun, with presence
 bright
 Cheer'st the low threshold of the pea-
 sant's cell!
 Not unrejoiced I see thee climb the sky
 In naked splendour, clear from mist or
 haze,
 Or cloud approaching to divert the rays,
 Which even in deepest winter testify 11
 Thy power and majesty,
 Dazzling the vision that presumes to gaze.
 —Well does thine aspect usher in this
 Day;
 As aptly suits therewith that modest pace
 Submitted to the chains 16
 That bind thee to the path which God
 ordains
 That thou shalt trace,
 Till, with the heavens and earth, thou
 pass away!
 Nor less, the stillness of these frosty
 plains, 20
 Their utter stillness, and the silent grace
 Of yon ethereal summits white with snow,
 (Whose tranquil pomp and spotless purity
 Report of storms gone by
 To us who tread below), 25
 Do with the service of this Day accord.
 —Divinest Object which the uplifted eye
 Of mortal man is suffered to behold;
 Thou, who upon those snow-clad Heights
 hast poured
 Meek lustre, nor forget'st the humble
 Vale; 30
 Thou who dost warm Earth's universal
 mould,
 And for thy bounty wert not unadored
 By pious men of old;
 Once more, heart-cheering Sun, I bid thee
 hail!
 Bright be thy course to-day, let not this
 promise fail! 35

II

'Mid the deep quiet of this morning
 hour,
 All nature seems to hear me while I speak,
 By feelings urged that do not vainly seek
 Apt language, ready as the tuneful notes
 That stream in blithe succession from the
 throats 40
 Of birds, in leafy bower,
 Warbling a farewell to a vernal shower.
 —There is a radiant though a short-lived
 flame, 43
 That burns for Poets in the dawning east;
 And oft my soul hath kindled at the same,
 When the captivity of sleep had ceased;
 But He who fixed immoveably the frame
 Of the round world, and built, by laws as
 strong,
 A solid refuge for distress—
 The towers of righteousness; 50
 He knows that from a holier altar came

POEMS DEDICATED TO NATIONAL

The quickening spark of this day's sacrifice;
Knows that the source is nobler whence
doth rise
The current of this matin song;
That deeper far it lies 55
Than aught dependent on the fickle skies.

III

Have we not conquered?—by the venge-
ful sword?

Ah no, by dint of Magnanimity;
That curbed the baser passions, and left
free

A loyal band to follow their liege Lord
Clear-sighted Honour, and his staid Com-
peers, 61

Along a track of most unnatural years;
In execution of heroic deeds
Whose memory, spotless as the crystal
beads

Of morning dew upon the untrodden
meads, 65

Shall live enrolled above the starry
spheres.

He, who in concert with an earthly string
Of Britain's acts would sing,

He with enraptured voice will tell
Of One whose spirit no reverse could
quell; 70

Of One that 'mid the failing never failed—
Who paints how Britain struggled and
prevailed

Shall represent her labouring with an eye
Of circumspect humanity;

Shall show her clothed with strength and
skill 75

All martial duties to fulfil;
Firm as a rock in stationary fight;

In motion rapid as the lightning's gleam;
Fierce as a flood-gate bursting at midnight

To rout the wicked from their giddy
dream— 80

Woe, woe to all that face her in the field!
Appalled she may not be, and cannot yield.

IV

And thus is *missed* the sole true glory
That can belong to human story!

At which they only shall arrive 85
Who through the abyss of weakness
dive.

The very humblest are too proud of heart;
And one brief day is rightly set apart

For Him who lifteth up and layeth low;
For that Almighty God to whom we owe,

Say not that we have vanquished—but
that we survive. 91

V

How dreadful the dominion of the impure!
Why should the Song be tardy to pro-
claim

That less than power unbounded could
not tame

That soul of Evil—which, from Hell let
loose, 95
Had filled the astonished world with such
abuse

As boundless patience only could endure?
—Wide-wasted regions—cities wrapt in
flame—

Who sees, may lift a streaming eye
To Heaven;—who never saw, may heave
a sigh; 100

But the foundation of our nature shakes,
And with an infinite pain the spirit aches,
When desolated countries, towns on fire,

Are but the avowed attire 104
Of warfare waged with desperate mind

Against the life of virtue in mankind;
Assaulting without ruth
The citadels of truth;

While the fair gardens of civility,
By ignorance defaced, 110
By violence laid waste,

Perish without reprieve for flower or tree!

VI

A crouching purpose—a distracted
will—

Opposed to hopes that battened upon
scorn,

And to desires whose ever-waxing horn
Not all the light of earthly power could
fill; 116

Opposed to dark, deep plots of patient
skill,

And to celerities of lawless force;
Which, spurning God, had flung away
remorse—

What could they gain but shadows of re-
dress? 120

—So bad proceeded propagating worse;
And discipline was passion's dire excess.

Widens the fatal web, its lines extend,
And deadlier poisons in the chalice blend.

When will your trials teach you to be
wise? 125

—O prostrate Lands, consult your
agonies!

VII

No more—the guilt is banished,
And, with the guilt, the shame is fled;

And, with the guilt and shame, the Woe
hath vanished,

Shaking the dust and ashes from her
head! 130

—No more—these lingerings of distress
Sully the limpid stream of thankfulness.

What robe can Gratitude employ
So seemly as the radiant vest of Joy?

What steps so suitable as those that move
In prompt obedience to spontaneous
measures 136

Of glory, and felicity, and love,
Surrendering the whole heart to sacred
pleasures?

INDEPENDENCE AND LIBERTY

VIII

O Britain! dearer far than life is dear,
 If one there be
 Of all thy progeny
 Who can forget thy prowess, never more
 Be that ungrateful Son allowed to hear
 Thy green leaves rustle or thy torrents
 roar.
 As springs the lion from his den, 145
 As from a forest-brake
 Upstarts a glistening snake,
 The bold Arch-despot re-appeared;—
 again
 Wide Europe heaves, impatient to be cast,
 With all her armed Powers, 150
 On that offensive soil, like waves
 upon a thousand shores.
 The trumpet blew a universal blast!
 But Thou art foremost in the field:—
 there stand:
 Receive the triumph destined to thy hand!
 All States have glorified themselves;—
 their claims 155
 Are weighed by Providence, in balance
 even;
 And now, in preference to the mightiest
 names,
 To Thee the exterminating sword is given.
 Dread mark of approbation, justly gained!
 Exalted office, worthily sustained! 160

IX

Preserve, O Lord! within our hearts
 The memory of Thy favour,
 That else insensibly departs,
 And loses its sweet savour!
 Lodge it within us!—as the power of
 light 165
 Lives inexhaustibly in precious gems,
 Fixed on the front of Eastern diadems,
 So shine our thankfulness for ever bright!
 What offering, what transcendent monu-
 ment
 Shall our sincerity to Thee present? 170
 —Not work of hands; but trophies that
 may reach
 To highest Heaven—the labour of the
 Soul;
 That builds, as thy unerring precepts
 teach,
 Upon the internal conquests made by
 each,
 Her hope of lasting glory for the whole.
 Yet will not heaven disown nor earth
 gainsay 176
 The outward service of this day;
 Whether the worshippers entreat
 Forgiveness from God's mercy-seat;
 Or thanks and praises to His throne
 ascend 180
 That He has brought our warfare to an
 end,
 And that we need no second victory!—
 Ha! what a ghastly sight for man to see;

And to the heavenly saints in peace who
 dwell,
 For a brief moment, terrible; 185
 But, to Thy sovereign penetration, fair,
 Before whom all things are, that were,
 All judgments that have been, or e'er
 shall be;
 Links in the chain of Thy tranquillity!
 Along the bosom of this favoured Nation,
 Breathe Thou, this day, a vital undula-
 tion! 191
 Let all who do this land inherit
 Be conscious of Thy moving spirit!
 Oh, 'tis a goodly Ordinance,—the sight,
 Though sprung from bleeding war, is one
 of pure delight; 195
 Bless Thou the hour, or ere the hour
 arrive,
 When a whole people shall kneel down in
 prayer,
 And, at one moment, in one rapture,
 strive
 With lip and heart to tell their gratitude
 For Thy protecting care, 200
 Their solemn joy—praising the Eternal
 Lord
 For tyranny subdued,
 And for the sway of equity renewed,
 For liberty confirmed, and peace restored!

X

But hark—the summons!—down the
 placid lake 205
 Floats the soft cadence of the church-
 tower bells;
 Bright shines the Sun, as if his beams
 would wake
 The tender insects sleeping in their cells;
 Bright shines the Sun—and not a breeze
 to shake 209
 The drops that tip the melting icicles.
O, enter now his Temple gate!
 Inviting words—perchance already flung
 (As the crowd press devoutly down the
 aisle
 Of some old Minster's venerable pile)
 From voices into zealous passion stung,
 While the tubed engine feels the inspiring
 blast, 216
 And has begun—its clouds of sound to
 cast
 Forth towards empyreal Heaven,
 As if the fretted roof were riven.
Us humbler ceremonies now await; 220
 But in the bosom, with devout respect
 The banner of our joy we will erect,
 And strength of love our souls shall
 elevate:
 For to a few collected in His name, 224
 Their heavenly Father will incline an ear
 Gracious to service hallowed by its aim;—
 Awake! the majesty of God revere!
 Go—and with foreheads meekly
 bowed

POEMS DEDICATED TO NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND LIBERTY

Present your prayers—go—and rejoice
 aloud—
 The Holy One will hear! 230
 And what, 'mid silence deep, with faith
 sincere,
 Ye, in your low and undisturbed estate,
 Shall simply feel and purely meditate—
 Of warnings—from the unprecedented
 might,
 Which, in our time, the impious have
 disclosed; 235

And of more arduous duties thence
 imposed
 Upon the future advocates of right;
 Of mysteries revealed,
 And judgments unrepealed,
 Of earthly revolution, 240
 And final retribution,—
 To his omniscience will appear
 An offering not unworthy to find place,
 On this high DAY of THANKS, before the
 Throne of Grace!

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT,¹ 1820

DEDICATION

(SENT WITH THESE POEMS, IN MS., TO —.)

DEAR Fellow-travellers! think not that the Muse,
 To You presenting these memorial Lays,
 Can hope the general eye thereon would gaze,
 As on a mirror that gives back the hues
 Of living Nature; no—though free to choose
 The greenest bowers, the most inviting ways,
 The fairest landscapes and the brightest days—
 Her skill she tried with less ambitious views.
 For You she wrought; Ye only can supply
 The life, the truth, the beauty: she confides
 In that enjoyment which with You abides,
 Trusts to your love and vivid memory;
 Thus far contented, that for You her verse
 Shall lack not power the 'meeting soul to pierce!'

W. WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, Nov., 1821.

I

FISH-WOMEN.—ON LANDING AT CALAIS

'Tis said, fantastic ocean doth enfold
 The likeness of whate'er on land is seen;
 But if the Nereid Sisters and their Queen,
 Above whose heads the tide so long hath
 rolled,
 The Dames resemble whom we here
 behold, 5
 How fearful were it down through open-
 ing waves
 To sink, and meet them in their fretted
 caves,
 Withered, grotesque, immeasurably old,
 And shrill and fierce in accent!—Fear it
 not:
 For they Earth's fairest daughters do
 excel; 10
 Pure undecaying beauty is their lot;

Their voices into liquid music swell,
 Thrilling each pearly cleft and sparry
 grot,
 The undisturbed abodes where Sea-
 nymphs dwell!

II

BRUGÈS

BRUGÈS I saw attired with golden light
 (Streamed from the west) as with a robe
 of power:
 The splendour fled; and now the sunless
 hour,
 That, slowly making way for peaceful
 night,
 Best suits with fallen grandeur, to my
 sight 5
 Offers the beauty, the magnificence,
 And sober graces, left her for defence
 Against the injuries of time, the spite
 Of fortune, and the desolating storms
 Of future war. Advance not—spare to
 hide, 10
 O gentle Power of darkness! these mild
 hues;
 Obscure not yet these silent avenues
 Of stateliest architecture, where the Forms
 Of nun-like females, with soft motion,
 glide!

III

BRUGÈS

THE Spirit of Antiquity—enshrined
 In sumptuous buildings, vocal in sweet
 song.
 In picture, speaking with heroic tongue,
 And with devout solemnities entwined—

¹ These *Memorials* were published as a separate volume early in 1822. The poems were mostly written between January and November, 1821, the latest written of all, the *Dedication*, being dated November. To save needless repetition, none of the following poems will be furnished with the usual chronological note, except those to which the preceding observation does not apply. Where the usual note is wanting, the following general note may be taken as appropriate:—Composed 1821.—Published 1822.—Exceptions will be duly noted.—ED.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT, 1820

Mounts to the seat of grace within the
mind:

Hence Forms that glide with swan-like⁵
ease along,

Hence motions, even amid the vulgar
throng,

To an harmonious decency confined:

As if the streets were consecrated ground,
The city one vast temple, dedicate¹⁰

To mutual respect in thought and deed;

To leisure, to forbearances sedate;

To social cares from jarring passions
freed;

A deeper peace than that in deserts found!

IV

INCIDENT AT BRUGÈS

[Composed after July, 1828.—Published: vol.
of 1835.]

IN Brugès town is many a street

Whence busy life hath fled;

Where, without hurry, noiseless feet

The grass-grown pavement tread.

There heard we, halting in the shade⁵

Flung from a Convent-tower,

A harp that tuneful prelude made

To a voice of thrilling power.

The measure, simple truth to tell,

Was fit for some gay throng;¹⁰

Though from the same grim turret fell

The shadow and the song.

When silent were both voice and chords,

The strain seemed doubly dear,

Yet sad as sweet,—for *English* words¹⁵

Had fallen upon the ear.

It was a breezy hour of eve;

And pinnacle and spire

Quivered and seemed almost to heave,

Clothed with innocuous fire;²⁰

But, where we stood, the setting sun

Showed little of his state;

And, if the glory reached the Nun,

'Twas through an iron grate.

Not always is the heart unwise,²⁵

Nor pity idly born,

If even a passing Stranger sighs

For them who do not mourn.

Sad is thy doom, self-solaced dove,

Captive, whoe'er thou be!³⁰

Oh! what is beauty, what is love,

And opening life to thee?

Such feeling pressed upon my soul,

A feeling sanctified

By one soft trickling tear that stole³⁵

From the Maiden at my side;

Less tribute could she pay than this,

Borne gaily o'er the sea,

Fresh from the beauty and the bliss

Of English liberty?⁴⁰

V

AFTER VISITING THE FIELD OF WATERLOO

A WINGED Goddess—clothed in vesture

wrought

Of rainbow colours; One whose port was

bold,

Whose overburthened hand could scarcely

hold

The glittering crowns and garlands which

it brought—

Hovered in air above the far-famed Spot.

She vanished; leaving prospect blank and

cold⁶

Of wind-swept corn that wide around us

rolled

In dreary billows, wood, and meagre cot,

And monuments that soon must disap-

pear:

Yet a dread local recompense we found;

While glory seemed betrayed, while

patriot-zeal¹¹

Sank in our hearts, we felt as men *should*

feel

With such vast hoards of hidden carnage

near,

And horror breathing from the silent

ground!

VI

BETWEEN NAMUR AND LIEGE

WHAT lovelier home could gentle Fancy

choose?

Is this the stream, whose cities, heights,

and plains,

War's favourite playground, are with

crimson stains

Familiar, as the Morn with pearly dew?

The Morn, that now, along the silver

MEUSE,⁵

Spreading her peaceful ensigns, calls the

swains

To tend their silent boats and ringing

wains,

Or strip the bough whose mellow fruit

bestrews

The ripening corn beneath it. As mine eyes

Turn from the fortified and threatening

hill,¹⁰

How sweet the prospect of yon watery

glade,

With its grey rocks clustering in pensive

shade—³⁰

That, shaped like old monastic turrets, rise

From the smooth meadow-ground, serene

and still!

VII

AIX-LA-CHAPELLE

Was it to disenchant, and to undo,

That we approached the Seat of Charle-

maine?

To sweep from many an old romantic

strain⁴⁰

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT, 1820

That ~~faith~~ which no devotion may renew!
Why ~~does~~ this puny Church present to
view

Her feeble columns? and that scanty chair!
This sword that one of our weak times
might wear!

Objects of false pretence, or meanly true!
If from a traveller's fortune I might claim
A palpable memorial of that day,¹⁰
Then would I seek the Pyrenean Breach
That ROLAND clove with huge two-handed
sway,

And to the enormous labour left his name,
Where unremitting frosts the rocky cres-
cent bleach.

VIII

IN THE CATHEDRAL AT COLOGNE

O FOR the help of Angels to complete
This Temple—Angels governed by a plan
Thus far pursued (how gloriously!) by
Man,

Studios that *He* might not disdain the
seat

Who dwells in heaven! But that aspir-
ing heat

Hath failed; and now, ye Powers! whose
gorgeous wings

And splendid aspect yon emblazonings
But faintly picture, 'twere an office meet
For you, on these unfinished shafts to try
The midnight virtues of your harmony:—
This vast design might tempt you to
repeat

Strains that call forth upon empyreal
ground

Immortal Fabrics, rising to the sound
Of penetrating harps and voices sweet!

IX

IN A CARRIAGE, UPON THE BANKS OF THE
RHINE

AMID this dance of objects sadness steals
O'er the defrauded heart—while sweep-
ing by,

As in a fit of Thespian jollity,
Beneath her vine-leaf crown the green
Earth reels:

Backward, in rapid evanescence, wheels
The venerable pageantry of Time,⁶
Each beetling rampart, and each tower
sublime,

And what the Dell unwillingly reveals
Of lurking cloistral arch, through trees
espied

Near the bright River's edge. Yet why
repine?¹⁰

To muse, to creep, to halt at will, to gaze—
Such sweet wayfaring—of life's spring
the pride,

Her summer's faithful joy—that still is
mine,

And in fit measure cheers autumnal days.

X HYMN

FOR THE BOATMEN, AS THEY APPROACH
THE RAPIDS UNDER THE CASTLE OF
HEIDELBERG

JESU! bless our slender Boat,
By the current swept along;
Loud its threatenings—let them not
Drown the music of a song
Breathed thy mercy to implore,⁵
Where these troubled waters roar!

Saviour, for our warning, seen
Bleeding on that precious Rood;
If, while through the meadows green
Gently wound the peaceful flood,¹⁰
We forgot Thee, do not Thou
Disregard Thy Suppliants now!

Hither, like yon ancient Tower
Watching o'er the River's bed,
Fling the shadow of thy power,¹⁵
Else we sleep among the dead;

Thou who trod'st the billowy sea,
Shield us in our jeopardy!

Guide our Bark among the waves;
Through the rocks our passage smooth;

Where the whirlpool frets and raves²¹
Let Thy love its anger soothe:

All our hope is placed in Thee;
*Miserere Domine!*¹

XI

THE SOURCE OF THE DANUBE

NOT, like his great Compeers, indignantly
Doth DANUBE spring to life!² The wan-
dering Stream

(Who loves the Cross, yet to the Cres-
cent's gleam

Unfolds a willing breast) with infant glee
Slips from his prison walls: and Fancy, free

To follow in his track of silver light,⁶
Mounts on rapt wing, and with a mo-
ment's flight

Hath reached the encincture of that
gloomy sea

Whose waves the Orphean lyre forbade to
meet

In conflict; whose rough winds forgot
their jars¹⁰

To waft the heroic progeny of Greece;
When the first Ship sailed for the Golden
Fleece—

ARGO—exalted for that daring feat
To fix in heaven her shape distinct with
stars.

XII

ON APPROACHING THE STAUB-BACH,
LAUTERBRUNNEN

UTTERED by whom, or how inspired—
designed

For what strange service, does this con-
cert reach

¹ See Note, p. 707.

² See Note, *ibid.*

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT, 1830

Our ears, and near the dwellings of man-kind!

'Mid fiends familiarised to human speech?—

No Mermaids warble—to allay the wind
Driving some vessel toward a dangerous beach—

More thrilling melodies; Witch answering Witch,

To chant a love-spell, never intertwined
Notes shrill and wild with art more musical:

Alas! that from the lips of abject Want
Or Idleness in tatters mendicant

The strain should flow—free Fancy to
enthral,

And with regret and useless pity haunt
This bold, this bright, this sky-born,
WATERFALL!¹

XIII

THE FALL OF THE AAR—HANDEC

FROM the fierce aspect of this River,
throwing

His giant body o'er the steep rock's brink,
Back in astonishment and fear we shrink:
But, gradually a calmer look bestowing,
Flowers we espy beside the torrent growing;

Flowers that peep forth from many a
cleft and chink,

And, from the whirlwind of his anger,
drink

Hues ever fresh, in rocky fortress blowing:
They suck—from breath that, threaten-
ing to destroy,

Is more benignant than the dewy eve—
Beauty, and life, and motions as of joy:
Nor doubt but HE to whom yon Pine-
trees nod

Their heads in sign of worship, Nature's
God,

These humbler adorations will receive.

XIV

MEMORIAL

NEAR THE OUTLET OF THE LAKE OF THUN

'DEM
ANDENKEN
MEINES FREUNDES
ALOYS REDING
MDCCCXVIII.'

Aloys Reding, it will be remembered, was Captain-General of the Swiss forces, which, with a courage and perseverance worthy of the cause, opposed the flagitious and too successful attempt of Buonaparte to subjugate their country.

AROUND a wild and woody hill
A gravelled pathway treading,
We reached a votive Stone that bears
The name of Aloys Reding.

¹ See Note, p. 707.

Well judged the Friend who placed it
there

For silence and protection;
And haply with a finer care
Of dutiful affection.

The Sun regards it from the West;
And, while in summer glory
He sets, his sinking yields a type
Of that pathetic story:

And oft he tempts the patriot Swiss
Amid the grove to linger;
Till all is dim, save this bright Stone
Touched by his golden finger.

XV

COMPOSED IN ONE OF THE CATHOLIC CANTONS¹

DOOMED as we are our native dust
To wet with many a bitter shower,
It ill befits us to disdain
The altar, to deride the fane,
Where simple Sufferers bend, in trust
To win a happier hour.

I love, where spreads the village lawn,
Upon some knee-worn cell to gaze:
Hail to the firm unmoving cross,
Aloft, where pines their branches toss!
And to the chapel far withdrawn,
That lurks by lonely ways!

Where'er we roam—along the brink
Of Rhine—or by the sweeping Po,
Through Alpine vale, or champaign wide,
Whate'er we look on, at our side
Be Charity!—to bid us think,
And feel, if we would know.

XVI

AFTER-THOUGHT¹

[Composed 1832.—Published 1832.]

OH Life! without thy chequered scene
Of right and wrong, of weal and woe,
Success and failure, could a ground
For magnanimity be found;
For faith, 'mid ruined hopes, serene?
Or whence could virtue flow?

[Composed 1837.—Published 1837.]

Pain entered through a ghastly breach—
Nor while sin lasts must effort cease;
Heaven upon earth's an empty boast;
But, for the bowers of Eden lost,
Mercy has placed within our reach
A portion of God's peace.

¹ The three stanzas comprised under this title originally (1822) formed part of the poem No. xxiv of this series, being the 5th, 4th, and 9th stanzas of that piece. In 1827 they were detached and arranged as now to form a separate poem. In 1832 a stanza (now stanza i of *After-thought*, No. xvi) was added to them. This again was taken from them in 1837, and formed, along with a second added stanza, into the independent poem entitled *After-thought*.—Ed.

² See Editor's note to No. xv.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT, 1820

XVII

SCENE ON THE LAKE OF BRIENTZ

'WHAT know we of the Blest above
But that they sing and that they love?'
Yet, if they ever did inspire
A mortal hymn, or shaped the choir,
Now, where those harvest-Damsels float
Homeward in their rugged Boat, 6
(While all the ruffling winds are fled—
Each slumbering on some mountain's
head),
Now, surely, hath that gracious aid
Been felt, that influence is displayed. 10
Pupils of Heaven, in order stand
The rustic Maidens, every hand
Upon a Sister's shoulder laid,—
To chant, as glides the boat along,
A simple, but a touching, song; 15
To chant, as Angels do above,
The melodies of Peace in love!

XVIII

ENGELBERG, THE HILL OF ANGELS¹

FOR gentlest uses, oft-times Nature takes
The work of Fancy from her willing
hands;
And such a beautiful creation makes
As renders needless spells and magic
wands,
And for the boldest tale belief commands.
When first mine eyes beheld that famous
Hill 6
The sacred ENGELBERG, celestial Bands,
With intermingling motions soft and still,
Hung round its top, on wings that
changed their hues at will.

Clouds do not name those Visitants;
they were 10

The very Angels whose authentic lays,
Sung from that heavenly ground in
middle air,
Made known the spot where piety should
raise

A holy Structure to the Almighty's praise.
Resplendent Apparition! if in vain 15
My ears did listen, 'twas enough to gaze;
And watch the slow departure of the
train,

Whose skirts the glowing Mountain
thirsted to detain.

XIX

OUR LADY OF THE SNOW

MEEK Virgin Mother, more benign
Than fairest Star, upon the height
Of thy own mountain,* set to keep
Lone vigils through the hours of sleep,
What eye can look upon thy shrine 5
Untroubled at the sight?

¹ See Note, p. 707.

* Mount Righl.

These crowded offerings as they hang
In sign of misery relieved,
Even these, without intent of theirs,
Report of comfortless despairs, 10
Of many a deep and careless pang
And confidence deceived.

To Thee, in this aerial cleft,
As to a common centre, tend
All sufferers that no more rely 15
On mortal succour—all who sigh
And pine, of human hope bereft,
Nor wish for earthly friend.

And hence, O Virgin Mother mild!
Though plenteous flowers around thee
blow, 20

Not only from the dreary strife
Of Winter, but the storms of life,
Thee have thy Votaries aptly styled,
OUR LADY OF THE SNOW.

Even for the Man who stops not here,
But down the irriguous valley hies, 26
Thy very name, O Lady! flings,
O'er blooming fields and gushing springs
A tender sense of shadowy fear,
And chastening sympathies! 30

Nor falls that intermingling shade
To summer-gladsomeness unkind:
It chastens only to requite
With gleams of fresher, purer, light;
While, o'er the flower-enamelled glade,
More sweetly breathes the wind. 36

But on!—a tempting downward way,
A verdant path before us lies;
Clear shines the glorious sun above;
Then give free course to joy and love, 40
Deeming 'the evil of the day
Sufficient for the wise.'

XX

EFFUSION

IN PRESENCE OF THE PAINTED TOWER OF TELL, AT ALTORF

This Tower stands upon the spot where grew the
Linden Tree against which his Son is said to
have been placed, when the Father's archery was
put to proof under circumstances so famous in
Swiss Story.

WHAT though the Italian pencil wrought
not here,
Nor such fine skill as did the meed bestow
On Marathonian valour, yet the tear
Springs forth in presence of this gaudy
show,

While narrow cares their limits overflow.
Thrice happy, burghers, peasants, war-
riors old, 6

Infants in arms, and ye, that as ye go
Homeward or schoolward, ape what ye
behold;

Heroes before your time, in frolic fancy
bold!

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT, 1820

And when that calm Spectatress from
on high 10
Looks down—the bright and solitary
Moon,
Who never gazes but to beautify;
And snow-fed torrents, which the blaze
of noon
Roused into fury, murmur a soft tune
That fosters peace, and gentleness recalls;
Then might the passing Monk receive a
boon 16
Of saintly pleasure from these pictured
walls,
While on the warlike groups the mellow-
ing lustre falls.
How blest the souls who when their trials
come
Yield not to terror or despondency, 20
But face like that sweet Boy their mortal
doom,
Whose head the ruddy apple tops, while he
Expectant stands beneath the linden tree;
He quakes not like the timid forest game,
But smiles—the hesitating shaft to free;
Assured that Heaven its justice will pro-
claim, 26
And to his Father give its own unerring
aim.

XXI

THE TOWN OF SCHWYTZ

By antique Fancy trimmed—though
lowly, bred
To dignity—in thee, O SCHWYTZ! are seen
The genuine features of the golden mean;
Equality by Prudence governèd,
Or jealous Nature ruling in her stead; 5
And, therefore, art thou blest with peace,
serene
As that of the sweet fields and meadows
green
In unambitious compass round thee spread.
Majestic BERNE, high on her guardian steep,
Holding a central station of command,
Might well be styled this noble body's
HEAD; 11
Thou, lodged 'mid mountainous entrench-
ments deep,
Its HEART; and ever may the heroic Land
Thy name, O SCHWYTZ, in happy freedom
keep!¹

XXII

ON HEARING THE 'RANZ DES VACHES' ON
THE TOP OF THE PASS OF ST. GOTHARD
I LISTEN—but no faculty of mine
Avals those modulations to detect,
Which, heard in foreign lands, the Swiss
affect

¹ Nearly 500 years (says Ebel, speaking of the French Invasion) had elapsed, when, for the first time, foreign soldiers were seen upon the frontiers of this small Canton, to impose upon it the laws of their governors.

With tenderest passion; leaving him to pine
(So fame reports) and die,—his sweet-
breathed kine 5
Remembering, and green Alpine pastures
decked
With vernal flowers. Yet may we not
rejoice
The tale as fabulous.—Here while I recline,
Mindful how others by this simple Strain
Are moved, for me—upon this Mountain
named 10
Of God himself from dread pre-
eminence—
Aspiring thoughts, by memory reclaimed,
Yield to the Music's touching influence;
And joys of distant home my heart en-
chain.

XXIII

FORT FUENTES

The Ruins of Fort Fuentes form the crest of a rocky eminence that rises from the plain at the head of the lake of Como, commanding views up the Valteline, and toward the town of Chiavenna. The prospect in the latter direction is characterised by melancholy sublimity. We rejoiced at being favoured with a distinct view of those Alpine heights; not, as we had expected from the breaking up of the storm, steeped in celestial glory, yet in communion with clouds floating or stationary—scatterings from heaven. The Ruin is interesting both in mass and in detail. An Inscription, upon elaborately-sculptured marble lying on the ground, records that the Fort had been erected by Count Fuentes in the year 1600, during the reign of Philip the Third; and the Chapel, about twenty years after, by one of his Descendants. Marble pillars of gateways are yet standing, and a considerable part of the Chapel walls: a smooth green turf has taken place of the pavement, and we could see no trace of altar or image; but everywhere something to remind one of former splendour, and of devastation and tumult. In our ascent we had passed abundance of wild vines intermingled with bushes: near the ruins were some ill tended, but growing willingly; and rock, turf, and fragments of the pile, are alike covered or adorned with a variety of flowers, among which the rose-coloured pink was growing in great beauty. While descending, we discovered on the ground, apart from the path, and at a considerable distance from the ruined Chapel, a statue of a Child in pure white marble, uninjured by the explosion that had driven it so far down the hill. "How little," we exclaimed, "are these things valued here! Could we but transport this pretty Image to our own garden!"—Yet it seemed it would have been a pity any one should remove it from its couch in the wilderness, which may be its own for hundreds of years.—*Extract from Journal.*

DREAD hour! when, upheaved by war's
sulphurous blast,
This sweet-visaged Cherub of Parian
stone
So far from the holy enclosure was cast,
To couch in this thicket of brambles
alone,

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT, 1820

To rest where the lizard may bask in the palm 5

Of his half-open hand pure from
blemish or speck;

And the green, gilded snake, without
troubling the calm

Of the beautiful countenance, twine
round his neck;

Where haply (kind service to Piety due!)
When winter the grove of its mantle
bereaves, 10

Some bird (like our own honoured red-
breast) may strew

The desolate Slumberer with moss and
with leaves.

FUENTES once harboured the good and the
brave,

Nor to her was the dance of soft
pleasure unknown:

Her banners for festal enjoyment did wave
While the thrill of her fives thro' the
mountains was blown: 16

Now gads the wild vine o'er the pathless
ascent:—

O silence of Nature, how deep is thy sway,
When the whirlwind of human destruc-
tion is spent,

Our tumults appeased, and our strifes
passed away! 20

XXIV

THE CHURCH OF SAN SALVADOR

SEEN FROM THE LAKE OF LUGANO

This Church was almost destroyed by lightning a
few years ago, but the altar and the image of
the Patron Saint were untouched. The Mount,
upon the summit of which the Church is built,
stands amid the intricacies of the Lake of Lu-
gano; and is, from a hundred points of view, its
principal ornament, rising to the height of 2,000
feet, and, on one side, nearly perpendicular.
The ascent is toilsome; but the traveller who
performs it will be amply rewarded. Splendid
fertility, rich woods and dazzling waters, seclu-
sion and confinement of view contrasted with
sea-like extent of plain fading into the sky; and
this again, in an opposite quarter, with an hori-
zon of the loftiest and boldest Alps—unite in
composing a prospect more diversified by mag-
nificence, beauty, and sublimity, than perhaps
any other point in Europe, of so inconsiderable
an elevation, commands.

* Thou sacred Pile! whose turrets rise
From yon steep mountain's loftiest stage,
Guarded by lone San Salvador;
Sink (if thou must) as heretofore,
To sulphurous bolts a sacrifice, 5
But ne'er to human rage!

On Horeb's top, on Sinai, deigned
To rest the universal Lord:

Why leap the fountains from their cells
Where everlasting Bounty dwells?— 10

That, while the Creature is sustained,
His God may be adored.

Cliffs, fountains, rivers, seasons, times—
Let all remind the soul of heaven;
Our slack devotion needs them all; 15
And Faith—so oft of sense the thrall,
While she, by aid of Nature, climbs—
May hope to be forgiven.

Glory, and patriotic Love,
And all the Pomps of this frail 'spot 20
Which men call Earth,' have yearned to
seek,

Associate with the simply meek,
Religion in the sainted grove,
And in the hallowed grot.

Thither, in time of adverse shocks, 25
Of fainting hopes and backward wills,
Did mighty Tell repair of old—
A Hero cast in Nature's mould,
Deliverer of the steadfast rocks
And of the ancient hills! 30

He, too, of battle-martyrs chief!
Who, to recall his daunted peers,
For victory shaped an open space,
By gathering with a wide embrace,
Into his single breast, a sheaf 35
Of fatal Austrian spears.¹

XXV

THE ITALIAN ITINERANT, AND THE SWISS GOATHERD

PART I

I

Now that the farewell tear is dried,
Heaven prosper thee, be hope thy guide!
Hope be thy guide, adventurous Boy;
The wages of thy travel, joy!
Whether for London bound—to trill 5
Thy mountain notes with simple skill;
Or on thy head to poise a show
Of Images in seemly row;
The graceful form of milk-white Steed,
Or Bird that soared with Ganymede; 10
Or through our hamlets thou wilt bear
The sightless Milton, with his hair
Around his placid temples curled;
And Shakspeare at his side—a freight,
If clay could think and mind were weight, 16
For him who bore the world!
Hope be thy guide, adventurous Boy;
The wages of thy travel, joy!

II

But thou, perhaps, (alert as free
Though serving sage philosophy), 20
Wilt ramble over hill and dale,
A Vender of the well-wrought Scale,
Whose sentient tube instructs to time
A purpose to a fickle clime:

¹ Arnold Winkelried, at the battle of Sempach, broke an Austrian phalanx in this manner. The event is one of the most famous in the annals of Swiss heroism; and pictures and prints of it are frequent throughout the country.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT, 1820

Whether thou choose this useful part,
Or minister to finer art, 26
Though robbed of many a cherished
dream,
And crossed by many a shattered scheme,
What stirring wonders wilt thou see
In the proud Isle of liberty! 30
Yet will the Wanderer sometimes pine
With thoughts which no delights can
chase,
Recall a Sister's last embrace,
His Mother's neck entwine;
Nor shall forget the Maiden coy 35
That *would* have loved the bright-haired
Boy!

III

My Song, encouraged by the grace
That beams from his ingenuous face,
For this Adventurer scruples not
To prophesy a golden lot; 40
Due recompense, and safe return
To COMO's steeps—his happy bourn!
Where he, aloft in garden-glade,
Shall tend, with his own dark-eyed Maid,
The towering maize, and prop the twig 46
That ill supports the luscious fig;
Or feed his eye in paths sun-proof
With purple of the trellis-roof,
That through the jealous leaves escapes
From Cadenabbia's pendent grapes. 50
—Oh might he tempt that Goatherd-child
To share his wanderings! him whose look
Even yet my heart can scarcely brook,
So touchingly he smiled—
As with a rapture caught from heaven— 56
For unasked alms in pity given.

PART II

I

With nodding plumes, and lightly drest
Like foresters in leaf-green vest,
The Helvetian Mountaineers, on ground
For Tell's dread archery renowned, 50
Before the target stood—to claim
The guerdon of the steadiest aim.
Loud was the rifle-gun's report—
A startling thunder quick and short!
But, flying through the heights around, 66
Echo prolonged a tell-tale sound
Of hearts and hands alike 'prepared
The treasures they enjoy to guard!
And, if there be a favoured hour
When Heroes are allowed to quit 70
The tomb, and on the clouds to sit
With tutelary power,
On their Descendants shedding grace—
This was the hour, and that the place.

II

But Truth inspired the Bards of old 75
When of an iron age they told,
Which to unequal laws gave birth,
And drove Astræa from the earth.

—A gentle Boy (perchance with blood
As noble as the best endued, 80
But seemingly a Thing despised;
Even by the sun and air unpriized;
For not a tinge or flowery streak
Appeared upon his tender cheek)
Heart-deaf to those rebounding notes, 86
Apart, beside his silent goats,
Sate watching in a forest shed,
Pale, ragged, with bare feet and head;
Mute as the snow upon the hill,
And, as the saint he prays to, still. 90
Ah, what avails heroic deed?
What liberty? if no defence
Be won for feeble Innocence.
Father of all! though wilful Manhood
read
His punishment in soul-distress, 95
Grant to the morn of life its natural
blessedness!

XXVI

THE LAST SUPPER, BY LEONARDO DA VINCI,
IN THE REFECTORY OF THE CONVENT OF
MARIA DELLA GRAZIA—MILAN¹

THO' searching damps and many an
envious flaw
Have marred this Work; the calm ethe-
real grace,
The love deep-seated in the Saviour's face,
The mercy, goodness, have not failed to
awe
The Elements; as they do melt and thaw
The heart of the Beholder—and erase 6
(At least for one rapt moment) every trace
Of disobedience to the primal law.
The annunciation of the dreadful truth
Made to the Twelve, survives: lip, fore-
head, cheek, 10
And hand reposing on the board in ruth
Of what it utters, while the unguilty seek
Unquestionable meanings—still bespeak
A labour worthy of eternal youth!

XXVII

THE ECLIPSE OF THE SUN, 1820

HIGH on her speculative tower
Stood Science waiting for the hour
When Sol was destined to endure
That darkening of his radiant face
Which Superstition strove to chase, 5
Erewhile, with rites impure.
Afloat beneath Italian skies,
Through regions fair as Paradise
We gaily passed,—till Nature wrought
A silent and unlooked-for change, 10
That checked the desultory range
Of joy and sprightly thought.

Where'er was dipped the toiling oar,
The waves danced round us as before,
As lightly, though of altered hue, 15

¹ See Note, p. 707.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT, 1820

'Mid recent coolness, such as falls
At noontide from umbrageous walls
That screen the morning dew.

No vapour stretched its wings; no cloud
Cast far or near a murky shroud; 20
The sky an azure field displayed;
'Twas sunlight sheathed and gently
charmed,
Of all its sparkling rays disarmed,
And as in slumber laid,—

Or something night and day between, 25
Like moonshine—but the hue was green;
Still moonshine, without shadow, spread
On jutting rock, and curved shore,
Where gazed the peasant from his door,
And on the mountain's head. 30

It tinged the Julian steep— it lay,
Lugano! on thy ample bay;
The solemnising veil was drawn
O'er villas, terraces, and towers;
To Albogasio's olive bowers, 35
Porlezza's verdant lawn.

But Fancy with the speed of fire
Hath past to Milan's loftiest spire,
And there alights 'mid that aerial host
Of Figures human and divine,¹ 40
White as the snows of Apennine
Indurated by frost.

Awe-stricken she beholds the array
That guards the Temple night and day;
Angels she sees—that might from heaven
have flown, 45
And Virgin-saints, who not in vain
Have striven by purity to gain
The beatific crown—

Sees long-drawn files, concentric rings
Each narrowing above each;—the wings,
The uplifted palms, the silent marble
lips 51

The starry zone of sovereign height²—
All steeped in this portentous light!
All suffering dim eclipse!

Thus after Man had fallen (if aught 55
These perishable spheres have wrought
May with that issue be compared)
Throngs of celestial visages,
Darkening like water in the breeze,
A holy sadness shared. 60

Lo! while I speak, the labouring Sun
His glad deliverance has begun:
The cypress waves her sombre plume
More cheerily; and town and tower,
The vineyard and the olive-bower, 65
Their lustre re-assume!

O Ye, who guard and grace my home
While in far-distant lands we roam,

¹ See Note, p. 707.

² Above the highest circle of figures is a zone of
metallic stars.

What countenance hath this Day put on
for you?

While we look round with favoured eyes,
Did sullen mists hide lake and skies 71
And mountains from your view?

Or was it given you to behold
Like vision, pensive though not cold,
From the smooth breast of gay Winander-
mere? 75

Saw ye the soft yet awful veil
Spread over Grasmere's lovely dale,
Helvellyn's brow severe?

I ask in vain—and know far less
If sickness, sorrow, or distress 80
Have spared my Dwelling to this hour;
Sad blindness! but ordained to prove
Our faith in Heaven's unfailing love
And all-controlling power.

XXVIII

THE THREE COTTAGE GIRLS

I

How blest the Maid whose heart—yet
free

From Love's uneasy sovereignty—
Beats with a fancy running high,
Her simple cares to magnify;
Whom Labour, never urged to toil, 5
Hath cherished on a healthful soil;
Who knows not pomp, who heeds not
pelf;

Whose heaviest sin it is to look
Askance upon her pretty Self
Reflected in some crystal brook; 10
Whom grief hath spared—who sheds no
tear

But in sweet pity; and can hear
Another's praise from envy clear.

II

Such (but O lavish Nature! why
That dark unfathomable eye, 15
Where lurks a Spirit that replies
To stillest mood of softest skies,
Yet hints at peace to be o'erthrown,
Another's first, and then her own?)
Such, haply, yon ITALIAN Maid, 20
Our Lady's laggard Votaress,
Halting beneath the chestnut shade
To accomplish there her loveliness:
Nice aid maternal fingers lend;
A Sister serves with slacker hand; 25
Then, glittering like a star, she joins the
festal band.

III

How blest (if truth may entertain
Coy fancy with a bolder strain)
The HELVETIAN Girl—who daily braves,
In her light skiff, the tossing waves, 30
And quits the bosom of the deep
Only to climb the rugged steep!

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT, 1820

—Say whence that modulated shout!
From Wood-nymph of Diana's throng?
Or does the greeting to a rout
Of giddy Bacchanals belong?
Jubilant outcry! rock and glade
Resounded—but the voice obeyed
The breath of an Helvetian Maid.

IV

Her beauty dazzles the thick wood; 40
Her courage animates the flood;
Her steps the elastic green-sward meets
Returning reluctant sweets;
The mountains (as ye heard) rejoice
Aloud, saluted by her voice!
Blithe Paragon of Alpine grace,
Be as thou art—for through thy veins
The blood of Heroes runs its race!
And nobly wilt thou brook the chains
That, for the virtuous, Life prepares; 50
The fetters which the Matron wears;
The patriot Mother's weight of anxious
cares!

V

'Sweet HIGHLAND Girl!' a very shower
Of beauty was thy earthly dower,
When thou didst flit before mine eyes,
Gay vision under sullen skies, 56
While Hope and Love around thee played,
Near the rough Falls of Inversneyd!
Have they, who nursed the blossom, seen
No breach of promise in the fruit? 60
Was joy, in following joy, as keen
As grief can be in grief's pursuit?
When youth had flown did hope still bless
Thy goings—or the cheerfulness 64
Of innocence survive to mitigate distress?

VI

But from our course why turn—to tread
A way with shadows overspread;
Where what we gladliest would believe
Is feared as what may most deceive? 69
Bright Spirit, not with amaranth crowned
But heath-bells from thy native ground,
Time cannot thin thy flowing hair,
Nor take one ray of light from Thee;
For in my Fancy thou dost share
The gift of immortality; 75
And there shall bloom, with Thee allied,
The Votress by Lugano's side;
And that intrepid Nymph, on Uri's steep
descried!

XXIX

THE COLUMN INTENDED BY BUONAPARTE
FOR A TRIUMPHAL EDIFICE IN MILAN,
NOW LYING BY THE WAY-SIDE IN THE
SIMPLON PASS

AMBITION—following down this far-famed
slope

Her Pioneer, the snow-dissolving Sun,

¹ See address to a Highland Girl, p. 228.

While clarions prate of kingdoms to be
won—

Perchance, in future ages, here may stop;
Taught to mistrust her flattering horoscope
By admonition from this prostrate Stone!
Memento un-inscribed of Pride o'er-
thrown, 7

Vanity's hieroglyphic; a choice trope
In Fortune's rhetoric. Daughter of the
Rock,

Rest where thy course was stayed by
Power divine! 10
The Soul transported sees, from hint of
thine,

Crimes which the great Avenger's hand
provoke,
Hears combats whistling o'er the ensan-
guined heath:

What groans! what shrieks! what quiet-
ness in death!

XXX

STANZAS

COMPOSED IN THE SIMPLON PASS

VALLOMBROSA! I longed in thy shadiest
wood

To slumber, reclined on the moss-covered
floor,

To listen to ANIO's precipitous flood,
When the stillness of evening hath
deepened its roar;

To range through the Temples of PAESTUM,
to muse 5

In POMPEII preserved by her burial in
earth;

On pictures to gaze where they drank in
their hues;

And murmur sweet songs on the ground
of their birth!

The beauty of Florence, the grandeur of
Rome,

Could I leave them unseen, and not yield
to regret? 10

With a hope (and no more) for a season to
come,

Which ne'er may discharge the magni-
ficent debt?

Thou fortunate Region! whose Greatness
inured

Awoke to new life from its ashes and dust;
Twice-glorified fields! if in sadness I
turned 15

From your infinite marvels, the sadness
was just.

Now, risen ere the light-footed Chamois
retires

From dew-sprinkled grass to heights
guarded with snow,

Toward the mists that hang over the land
of my Sires,

From the climate of myrtles contented I
go. 20

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT, 1820

My thoughts become bright like yon
 edging of Pines
 On the steep's lofty verge: how it black-
 ened the air!
 But, touched from behind by the Sun, it
 now shines
 With threads that seem part of his own
 silver hair.

Though the toil of the way with dear
 Friends we divide,²⁵
 Though by the same zephyr our temples
 be fanned
 As we rest in the cool orange-bower side
 by side,
 A yearning survives which few hearts
 shall withstand:
 Each step hath its value while homeward
 we move;—
 O joy when the girdle of England appears!
 What moment in life is so conscious of
 love,³¹
 Of love in the heart made more happy by
 tears?

XXXI

ECHO, UPON THE GEMMI

WHAT beast of chase hath broken from
 the cover?
 Stern GEMMI listens to as full a cry,
 As multitudinous a harmony
 Of sounds as rang the heights of Latmos
 over,
 When, from the soft couch of her sleeping
 Lover,⁵
 Up-starting, Cynthia skimmed the moun-
 tain-dew
 In keen pursuit—and gave, where'er she flew,
 Impetuous motion to the Stars above her.
 A solitary Wolf-dog, ranging on
 Through the bleak concave, wakes this
 wondrous chime¹⁰
 Of aery voices locked in unison,—
 Faint—far-off—near—deep—solemn
 and sublime!—
 So, from the body of one guilty deed,
 A thousand ghostly fears, and haunting
 thoughts, proceed!

XXXII

PROCESSIONS

SUGGESTED ON A SABBATH MORNING IN
 THE VALE OF CHAMOUNY

To appease the Gods; or public thanks to
 yield;
 Or to solicit knowledge of events,
 Which in her breast Futurity concealed;
 And that the past might have its true intents
 Feelingly told by living monuments—⁵
 Mankind of yore were prompted to devise
 Rites such as yet Persepolis presents
 Graven on her cankered walls, solemnities
 That moved in long array before admiring
 eyes.

The Hebrews thus, carrying in joyful
 state¹⁰
 Thick boughs of palm, and willows from
 the brook,
 Marched round the altar—to commemo-
 rate
 How, when their course they through the
 desert took,
 Guided by signs which ne'er the sky for-
 sook,
 They lodged in leafy tents and cabins
 low;¹⁵
 Green boughs were borne, while, for the
 blast that shook
 Down to the earth the walls of Jericho,
 Shouts rise, and storms of sound from
 lifted trumpets blow!

And thus, in order, 'mid the sacred grove
 Fed in the Libyan waste by gushing wells,
 The priests and damsels of Ammonian
 Jove²¹
 Provoked responses with shrill canticles;
 While, in a ship begirt with silver bells,
 They round his altar bore the horned God,
 Old Cham, the solar Deity, who dwells
 Aloft, yet in a tilting vessel rode,²⁶
 When universal sea the mountains over-
 flowed.

Why speak of Roman Poms? the haughty
 claims
 Of Chiefs triumphant after ruthless wars;
 The feast of Neptune—and the Cereal
 Games,³⁰
 With images, and crowns, and empty
 cars;
 The dancing Sali—on the shields of Mars
 Smiting with fury; and a deeper dread
 Scattered on all sides by the hideous jars
 Of Corybantian cymbals, while the head
 Of Cybelé was seen, sublimely turreted!

At length a Spirit more subdued and soft
 Appeared—to govern Christian pageant-
 ries:
 The Cross, in calm procession, borne aloft
 Moved to the chant of sober litanies.⁴⁰
 Even such, this day, came wafted on the
 breeze
 From a long train—in hooded vestments
 fair
 Enwrapt—and winding, between Alpine
 trees
 Spiry and dark, around their House of
 prayer,⁴⁴
 Below the icy bed of bright ARGENTIERE.
 Still in the vivid freshness of a dream,
 The pageant haunts me as it met our eyes!
 Still, with those white-robed Shapes—a
 living Stream,
 The glacier Pillars join in solemn guise¹
 For the same service, by mysterious ties;

¹ See Note, p. 707.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT, 1820

Numbers exceeding credible account 51
Of number, pure and silent Votaries
Issuing or issued from a wintry fount;
The impenetrable heart of that exalted
Mount!

They, too, who send so far a holy gleam
While they the Church engird with motion
slow, 56

A product of that awful Mountain seem,
Poured from his vaults of everlasting snow;
Not virgin lilies marshalled in bright row,
Not swans descending with the stealthy
tide, 60

A livelier sisterly resemblance show
Than the fair Forms, that in long order glide,
Bear to the glacier band—those Shapes
aloft descried.

Trembling, I look upon the secret springs
Of that licentious craving in the mind 65
To act the God among external things,
To bind, on apt suggestion, or unbind;
And marvel not that antique Faith in-
clined

To crowd the world with metamorphosis,
Vouchsafed in pity or in wrath assigned;
Such insolent temptations wouldst thou
miss, 71
Avoid these sights; nor brood o'er Fable's
dark abyss!

XXXIII ELEGIAC STANZAS

The lamented Youth, whose untimely death gave occasion to these elegiac verses, was Frederick William Goddard, from Boston in North America. He was in his twentieth year, and had resided for some time with a clergyman in the neighbourhood of Geneva for the completion of his education. Accompanied by a fellow-pupil, a native of Scotland, he had just set out on a Swiss tour when it was his misfortune to fall in with a friend of mine who was hastening to join our party. The travellers, after spending a day together on the road from Berne and at Soleure, took leave of each other at night, the young men having intended to proceed directly to Zurich. But early in the morning my friend found his new acquaintances, who were informed of the object of his journey, and the friends he was in pursuit of, equipped to accompany him. We met at Lucerne the succeeding evening, and Mr. G. and his fellow-student became in consequence our travelling companions for a couple of days. We ascended the Righi together; and, after contemplating the sunrise from that noble mountain, we separated at an hour and on a spot well suited to the parting of those who were to meet no more. Our party descended through the valley of Our Lady of the Snow, and our late companions, to Art. We had hoped to meet in a few weeks at Geneva; but on the third succeeding day (on the 21st of August) Mr. Goddard perished, being overset in a boat while crossing the Lake of Zurich. His companion saved himself by swimming, and was hospitably received in the mansion of a Swiss gentleman (M. Keller) situated on the eastern coast of the lake. The corpse of poor Goddard

was cast ashore on the estate of the same gentleman, who generously performed all the rites of hospitality which could be rendered to the dead as well as to the living. He caused a handsome mural monument to be erected in the church of K. snacht, which records the premature fate of the young American, and on the shores too of the lake the traveller may read an inscription pointing out the spot where the body was deposited by the waves.

LULLED by the sound of pastoral bells,
Rude Nature's Pilgrims did we go,
From the dread summit of the Queen¹
Of mountains, through a deep ravine,
Where, in her holy chapel, dwells 5
'Our Lady of the Snow.'

The sky was blue, the air was mild;
Free were the streams and green the
bowers;

As if, to rough assaults unknown,
The genial spot had ever shown 10
A countenance that as sweetly smiled—
The face of summer-hours.

And we were gay, our hearts at ease;
With pleasure dancing through the frame
We journeyed; all we knew of care— 15
Our path that straggled here and there;
Of trouble—but the fluttering breeze;
Of Winter—but a name.

If foresight could have rent the veil
Of three short days—but hush—no more!
Calm is the grave, and calmer none 21
Than that to which thy cares are gone,
Thou Victim of the stormy gale;
Asleep on ZURICH's shore!

Oh GODDARD!—what art thou?—
a name— 25

A sunbeam followed by a shade!
Nor more, for aught that time supplies,
The great, the experienced, and the wise:
Too much from this frail earth we claim,
And therefore are betrayed. 30

We met, while festive mirth ran wild,
Where, from a deep lake's mighty urn,
Forth slips, like an enfranchised slave,
A sea-green river, proud to lave,
With current swift and undefiled, 35
The towers of old LUCERNE.

We parted upon solemn ground
Far-lifted towards the unfading sky;
But all our thoughts were then of Earth,
That gives to common pleasures birth;
And nothing in our hearts we found 41
That prompted even a sigh.

Fetch, sympathising Powers of air,
Fetch, ye that post o'er seas and lands,
Herbs moistened by Virginian dew, 45
A most untimely grave to strew,
Whose turf may never know the care
Of kindred human hands!

¹ Mount Righi—Regina Montium.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT, 1820

Beloved by every gentle Muse
He left his Transatlantic home:
Europe, a realised romance,
Had opened on his eager glance;
What present bliss!—what golden views!
What stores for years to come!

Though lodged within no vigorous frame,
His soul her daily tasks renewed,
Blithe as the lark on sun-gilt wings
High poised—or as the wren that sings
In shady places, to proclaim
Her modest gratitude.

Not vain is sadly-uttered praise;
The words of truth's memorial vow
Are sweet as morning fragrance shed
From flowers 'mid GOLDAU'S ruins bred;
As evening's fondly-lingering rays,
On RIGHI'S silent brow.

Lamented youth! to thy cold clay
Fit obsequies the Stranger paid;
And piety shall guard the Stone
Which hath not left the spot unknown
Where the wild waves resigned their
prey—
And that which marks thy bed.

And, when thy Mother weeps for Thee,
Lost Youth! a solitary Mother;
This tribute from a casual Friend
A not unwelcome aid may lend,
To feed the tender luxury,
The rising pang to smother.¹

XXXIV

SKY-PROSPECT—FROM THE PLAIN OF
FRANCE

Lo! in the burning west, the craggy nape
Of a proud Ararat! and, thereupon,
The Ark, her melancholy voyage done!
Yon rampant cloud mimics a lion's shape;
There, combats a huge crocodile—agate
A golden spear to swallow! and that
brown
And massy grove, so near yon blazing
town,
Stirs and recedes—destruction to escape!
Yet all is harmless—as the Elysian shades
Where Spirits dwell in undisturbed re-
pose—
Silently disappears, or quickly fades:
Meek Nature's evening comment on the
shows
That for oblivion take their daily birth
From all the fuming vanities of Earth!

¹ The persuasion here expressed was not groundless. The first human consolation that the afflicted Mother felt was derived from this tribute to her son's memory, a fact which the author learned, at his own residence, from her Daughter, who visited Europe some years afterwards.—Goldau is one of the villages desolated by the fall of part of the Mountain Rossberg.

XXXV

ON BEING STRANDED NEAR THE HARBOUR
OF BOULOGNE¹

WHY cast ye back upon the Gallic shore,
Ye furious waves! a patriotic Son
Of England—who in hope her coast had
won,
His project crowned, his pleasant travel
o'er?
Well—let him pace this noted beach once
more,
That gave the Roman his triumphal shells;
That saw the Corsican his cap and bells
Haughtily shake, a dreaming Con-
queror!—
Enough: my Country's cliffs I can behold,
And proudly think, beside the chafing
sea,
Of checked ambition, tyranny controlled,
And folly cursed with endless memory:
These local recollections ne'er can cloy;
Such ground I from my very heart enjoy!

XXXVI

AFTER LANDING—THE VALLEY OF DOVER
NOVEMBER, 1820

WHERE be the noisy followers of the game
Which faction breeds? the turmoil where,
that passed
Through Europe, echoing from the news-
man's blast,
And filled our hearts with grief for
England's shame?
Peace greets us;—rambling on without
an aim
We mark majestic herds of cattle, free
To ruminate, couched on the grassy lea;
And hear far-off the mellow horn proclaim
The Season's harmless pastime. Ruder
sound
Stirs not; enrapt I gaze with strange
delight,
While consciousnesses, not to be disowned,
Here only serve a feeling to invite
That lifts the spirit to a calmer height,
And makes this rural stillness more pro-
found.

XXXVII

AT DOVER

[Composed 1837.—Published: Sonnet-vol. of
1838; ed. 1845.]

FROM the Pier's head, musing, and with
increase
Of wonder, I have watched this sea-side
Town,
Under the white cliff's battlemented
crown,
Hushed to a depth of more than Sabbath
peace:
The streets and quays are thronged, but
why disown

¹ See Note, p. 708.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR ON THE CONTINENT, 1820

From the first tasting of the fatal Tree,
Till the bright Star appeared in eastern
skies,

Announcing, ONE was born mankind to
free;
His acts, his wrongs, his final sacrifice;
Lessons for every heart, a Bible for all
eyes.

Our pride misleads, our timid likings kill.
—Long may these homely Works devised
of old,

These simple efforts of Helvetian skill,
Aid, with congenial influence, to uphold
The State,—the Country's destiny to
mould;

Turning, for them who pass, the common
dust

Of servile opportunity to gold;

Filling the soul with sentiments august—
The beautiful, the brave, the holy, and
the just!

No more; Time halts not in his noiseless
march—

Nor turns, nor winds, as doth the liquid
flood;

Life slips from underneath us, like that
arch

Of airy workmanship whereon we stood,
Earth stretched below, heaven in our
neighbourhood.

Go forth, my little Book! pursue thy way;
Go forth, and please the gentle and the
good;

Nor be a whisper stifled, if it say
That treasures, yet untouched, may grace
some future Lay.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN ITALY,¹ 1837

TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

COMPANION! by whose buoyant Spirit cheered,
In whose experience trusting, day by day
Treasures I gained with zeal that neither feared
The toils nor felt the crosses of the way,
These records take, and happy should I be
Were but the Gift a meet Return to thee
For kindnesses that never ceased to flow,
And prompt self-sacrifice to which I owe
Far more than any heart but mine can know.

W. WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT,
Feb. 14th, 1842.

The Tour of which the following Poems are very
inadequate remembrances was shortened by
report, too well founded, of the prevalence of
Cholera at Naples. To make some amends for
what was reluctantly left unseen in the South of
Italy, we visited the Tuscan Sanctuaries among
the Apennines, and the principal Italian Lakes
among the Alps. Neither of those lakes, nor
of Venice, is there any notice in these Poems,
chiefly because I have touched upon them else-
where. See, in particular, 'Descriptive Sketches,'
'Memorials of a Tour on the Continent in 1820,'
and a Sonnet upon the extinction of the Vene-
tian Republic.

I

MUSINGS NEAR AQUAPENDENTE APRIL, 1837

[Composed 1837.—Published: vol. of 1842.]

YE Apennines! with all your fertile vales
Deeply embosomed, and your winding
shores

Of either sea, an Islander by birth,

A Mountaineer by habit, would resound
Your praise, in meet accordance with
your claims

Bestowed by Nature, or from man's great
deeds

Inherited!—presumptuous thought!—it
fled

Like vapour, like a towering cloud, dis-
solved.

Not, therefore, shall my mind give way to
sadness:—

Yon snow-white torrent-fall, plumb down
it drops

Yet ever hangs or seems to hang in air,
Lulling the leisure of that high-perched
town,

AQUAPENDENTE, in her lofty site
Its neighbour and its namesake—town,
and flood

Forth flashing out of its own gloomy
chasm

Bright sunbeams—the fresh verdure of
this lawn

Strewn with grey rocks, and on the
horizon's verge,

O'er intervenient waste, through glimmer-
ing haze,

Unquestionably kenned, that cone-shaped
hill

With fractured summit, no indifferent
sight

To travellers, from such comforts as are
thine,

¹ This group of Poems first appeared in the volume entitled *Poems, Chiefly of Early and Late Years*, published in 1842. The Sonnets all, or almost all, belong to the year, December, 1840—December, 1841. Where no note recording dates of composition and of publication is given, it is to be assumed that the poem was written in 1840–1, and published (as described above) in 1842.—Ed.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN ITALY, 1837

Bleak Radicofani! escaped with joy—
These are before me; and the varied scene
May well suffice, till noon-tide's sultry
heat

Relax, to fix and satisfy the mind 25
Passive yet pleased. What! with this
Broom in flower

Close at my side! She bids me fly to greet
Her sisters, soon like her to be attired
With golden blossoms opening at the feet
Of my own Fairfield. The glad greeting
given, 30

Given with a voice and by a look returned
Of old companionship, Time counts not
minutes

Ere, from accustomed paths, familiar
fields,

The local Genius hurries me aloft, 34
Transported over that cloud-wooing hill,
Seat Sandal, a fond suitor of the clouds,
With dream-like smoothness, to Hel-
vellyn's top,

There to alight upon crisp moss and range,
Obtaining ampler boon, at every step,
Of visual sovereignty—hills multitu-
dinous, 40

(Not Apennine can boast of fairer), hills
Pride of two nations, wood and lake and
plains,

And prospect right below of deep coves
shaped

By skeleton arms, that, from the moun-
tain's trunk

Extended, clasp the winds, with mutual
moan 45

Struggling for liberty, while undismayed
The shepherd struggles with them. On-
ward thence

And downward by the skirt of Greenside
fell,

And by Glenridding-screes, and low Glen-
coign, 49

Places forsaken now, though loving still
The Muses, as they loved them in the days
Of the old minstrels and the border
bards.—

But here am I fast bound; and let it pass,
The simple rapture;—who that travels far
To feed his mind with watchful eyes could
share 55

Or wish to share it?—One there surely
was,

'The Wizard of the North,' with anxious
hope

Brought to this genial climate, when
disease

Preyed upon body and mind—yet not the
less

Had his sunk eye kindled at those dear
words 60

That spake of bards and minstrels; and
his spirit

Had flown with mine to old Helvellyn's
brow,

Where once together, in his day of
strength,

We stood rejoicing, as if earth were free
From sorrow, like the sky above our
heads. 65

Years followed years, and when, upon
the eve

Of his last going from Tweed-side, thought
turned,

Or by another's sympathy was led,
To this bright land, Hope was for him no
friend,

Knowledge no help; Imagination shaped
No promise. Still, in more than ear-deep
seats, 71

Survives for me, and cannot but survive
The tone of voice which wedded borrowed
words

To sadness not their own, when, with
faint smile

Forced by intent to take from speech its
edge, 75

He said, 'When I am there, although 'tis
fair,

'Twill be another Yarrow.' Prophecy
More than fulfilled, as gay Campania's
shores

Soon witnessed, and the city of seven hills,
Her sparkling fountains, and her moulder-
ing tombs; 80

And more than all, that Eminence which
showed

Her splendours, seen, not felt, the while
he stood

A few short steps (painful they were) apart
From Tasso's Convent-haven, and retired
grave.

Peace to their Spirits! why should
Poesy 85

Yield to the lure of vain regret, and hover
In gloom on wings with confidence out-
spread

To move in sunshine?—Utter thanks, my
Soul!

Tempered with awe, and sweetened by
compassion

For them who in the shades of sorrow
dwell, 90

That I—so near the term to human life
Appointed by man's common heritage,
Frail as the frailest, one withal (if that
Deserve a thought) but little known to
fame—

Am free to rove where Nature's loveliest
looks, 95

Art's noblest relics, history's rich bequests,
Failed to reanimate and but feebly cheered
The whole world's Darling—free to rove
at will

O'er high and low, and if requiring rest,
Rest from enjoyment only.

Thanks poured forth 100

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN ITALY, 1837

For what thus far hath blessed my wander-
ings, ^{thanks}

Fervent but humble as the lips can breathe
Where gladness seems a duty—let me
guard

Those seeds of expectation which the fruit
Already gathered in this favoured Land
Enfolds within its core. The faith be
mine, ¹⁰⁶

That He who guides and governs all,
approves

When gratitude, though disciplined to
look

Beyond these transient spheres, doth wear
a crown

Of earthly hope put on with trembling
hand; ¹¹⁰

Nor is least pleased, we trust, when
golden beams,

Reflected through the mists of age, from
hours

Of innocent delight, remote or recent,
Shoot but a little way—'tis all they can—
Into the doubtful future. Who would
keep ¹¹⁵

Power must resolve to cleave to it through
life,

Else it deserts him, surely as he lives.
Saints would not grieve nor guardian
angels frown

If one—while tossed, as was my lot to be,
In a frail bark urged by two slender oars
Over waves rough and deep, that, when
they broke, ¹²¹

Dashed their white foam against the
palace walls

Of Genoa the superb—should there be led
To meditate upon his own appointed tasks,
However humble in themselves, with
thoughts ¹²⁵

Raised and sustained by memory of Him
Who oftentimes within those narrow
bounds

Rocked on the surge, there tried his
spirit's strength

And grasp of purpose, long ere sailed his
ship

To lay a new world open.

Nor less prized ¹³⁰
Be those impressions which incline the
heart

To mild, to lowly, and to seeming weak,
Bend that way her desires. The dew, the
storm—

The dew whose moisture fell in gentle
drops

On the small hyssop destined to be-
come, ¹³⁵

By Hebrew ordinance devoutly kept,
A purifying instrument—the storm

That shook on Lebanon the cedar's top,
And as it shook, enabling the blind roots
Further to force their way, endowed its
trunk ¹⁴⁰

With magnitude and strength fit to up-
hold

The glorious temple—did alike proceed
From the same gracious will, were both an
offspring

Of bounty infinite.

Between Powers that aim
Higher to lift their lofty heads, im-
pelled ¹⁴⁵

By no profane ambition, Powers that
thrive

By conflict, and their opposites, that trust
In lowliness—a mid-way tract there lies

Of thoughtful sentiment for every mind
Pregnant with good. Young, Middle-
aged, and Old, ¹⁵⁰

From century on to century, must have
known

The emotion—nay, more fitly were it
said—

The blest tranquillity that sunk so deep
Into my spirit, when I paced, enclosed

In Pisa's Campo Santo, the smooth floor
Of its Arcades paved with sepulchral slabs,

And through each window's open fret-
work looked ¹⁵⁷

O'er the blank Area of sacred earth
Fetched from Mount Calvary, or haply
delved

In precincts nearer to the Saviour's tomb,
By hands of men, humble as brave, who
fought ¹⁶¹

For its deliverance—a capacious field
That to descendants of the dead it holds

And to all living mute memento breathes,
More touching far than aught which on
the walls ¹⁶⁵

Is pictured, or their epitaphs can speak,
Of the changed City's long-departed
power,

Glory, and wealth, which, perilous as
they are,

Here did not kill, but nourished, Piety.
And, high above that length of cloistral
roof, ¹⁷⁰

Peering in air and backed by azure sky,
To kindred contemplations ministers

The Baptistery's dome, and that which
swells

From the Cathedral pile; and with the
twain

Conjoined in prospect mutable or fixed
(As hurry on in eagerness the feet, ¹⁷⁶

Or pause) the summit of the Leaning-
tower.

Nor less remuneration waits on him
Who having left the Cemetery stands

In the Tower's shadow, of decline and
fall ¹⁸⁰

Admonished not without some sense of
fear,

Fear that soon vanishes before the sight
Of splendour unextinguished, pomp un-
scathed,

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN ITALY, 1837

And beauty unimpaired. Grand in itself,
And for itself, the assemblage, grand and
fair 185

To view, and for the mind's consenting
eye

A type of age in man, upon its front
Bearing the world-acknowledged evidence
Of past exploits, nor fondly after more
Struggling against the stream of destiny,
But with its peaceful majesty content.

—Oh what a spectacle at every turn 192
The Place unfolds, from pavement skin-
ned with moss,

Or grass-grown spaces, where the heaviest
foot

Provokes no echoes, but must softly
tread; 195

Where Solitude with Silence paired stops
short

Of Desolation, and to Ruin's scythe
Decay submits not.

But where'er my steps
Shall wander, chiefly let me cull with care
Those images of genial beauty, oft 200
Too lovely to be pensive in themselves
But by reflexion made so, which do best
And fittest serve to crown with fragrant
wreaths

Life's cup when almost filled with years,
like mine.

—How lovely robed in forenoon light
and shade, 205

Each ministering to each, didst thou
appear

Savona, Queen of territory fair
As aught that marvellous coast thro' all
its length

Yields to the Stranger's eye. Remem-
brance holds

As a selected treasure thy one cliff, 210
That, while it wore for melancholy crest
A shattered Convent, yet rose proud to
have

Clinging to its steep sides a thousand herbs
And shrubs, whose pleasant looks gave
proof how kind

The breath of air can be where earth had
else 215

Seemed churlish. And behold, both far
and near,

Garden and field all decked with orange
bloom,

And peach and citron, in Spring's mild-
est breeze

Expanding; and, along the smooth shore
curved

Into a natural port, a tideless sea, 220
To that mild breeze with motion and with
voice

Softly responsive; and, attuned to all
Those vernal charms of sight and sound,
appeared

Smooth space of turf which from the
guardian fort

Sloped seaward, turf whose tender April
green, 225

In coolest climes too fugitive, might even
here

Plead with the sovereign Sun for longer stay
Than his unmitigated beams allow,

Nor plead in vain, if beauty could pre-
serve,

From mortal change, aught that is born
on earth 230

Or doth on time depend.

While on the brink
Of that high Convent-crested cliff I stood,

Modest Savona! over all did brood
A pure poetic Spirit—as the breeze,

Mild—as the verdure, fresh—the sun-
shine, bright— 235

Thy gentle Chiabrera!—not a stone,
Mural or level with the trodden floor,

In Church or Chapel, if my curious quest
Missed not the truth, retains a single name

Of young or old, warrior, or saint, or sage,
To whose dear memories his sepulchral
verse 241

Paid simple tribute, such as might have
flowed

From the clear spring of a plain English
heart,

Say rather, one in native fellowship
With all who want not skill to couple
grief 245

With praise, as genuine admiration
prompts.

The grief, the praise, are severed from
their dust,

Yet in his page the records of that worth
Survive, uninjured;—glory then to words,
Honour to word-preserving Arts, and
hail 250

Ye kindred local influences that still,
If Hope's familiar whispers merit faith,

Await my steps when they the breezy
height

Shall range of philosophic Tusculum;
Or Sabine vales explored inspire a wish

To meet the shade of Horace by the side
Of his Bandusian fount; or I invoke 257

His presence to point out the spot where
once

He sate, and eulogised with earnest pen
Peace, leisure, freedom, moderate de-
sires; 260

And all the immunities of rural life
Extolled, behind Vacuna's crumbling
fane.

Or let me loiter, soothed with what is
given,

Nor asking more, on that delicious Bay,
Parthenope's Domain—Virgilian haunt,

Illustrated with never-dying verse, 266

And, by the Poet's laurel-shaded tomb,
Age after age to Pilgrims from all lands
Endeared.

And who—if not a man as cold

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN ITALY, 1837

In heart as dull in brain—while pacing
ground 270

Chosen by Rome's legendary Bards, high
minds

Out of her early struggles well inspired
To localise heroic acts—could look

Upon the spots with undelighted eye,
Though even to their last syllable the
Lays 275

And very names of those who gave them
birth

Have perished?—Verily, to her utmost
depth,

Imagination feels what Reason fears not
To recognise, the lasting virtue lodged

In those bold fictions that, by deeds
assigned 280

To the Valerian, Fabian, Curian Race,
And others like in fame, created Powers

With attributes from History derived,
By Poesy irradiate, and yet graced,

Through marvellous felicity of skill, 285
With something more propitious to high
aims

Than either, pent within her separate
sphere,

Can oft with justice claim.
And not disdaining

Union with those primeval energies
To virtue consecrate, stoop ye from your
height 290

Christian Traditions! at my Spirit's call
Descend, and, on the brow of ancient
Rome

As she survives in ruin, manifest
Your glories mingled with the brightest
hues

Of her memorial halo, fading, fading,
But never to be extinct while Earth
endures, 296

O come, if undishonoured by the prayer,
From all her Sanctuaries!—Open for my
feet

Ye Catacombs, give to mine eyes a
glimpse

Of the Devout, as, 'mid your glooms
convened 300

For safety, they of yore enclasped the
Cross

On knees that ceased from trembling, or
intoned

Their orisons with voices half-suppressed,
But sometimes heard, or fancied to be
heard,

Even at this hour.
And thou Mamertine prison, 305

Into that vault receive me from whose depth
Issues, revealed in no presumptuous vi-
sion,

Albeit lifting human to divine,
A Saint, the Church's Rock, the mystic
Keys

Grasped in his hand; and lo! with up-
right sword 310

Prefiguring his own impendent doom,
The Apostle of the Gentiles; both pre-
pared

To suffer pains with heathen scorn and
hate

Inflicted;—blessed Men, for so to Heaven
They follow their dear Lord!

Time flows—nor winds, 315
Nor stagnates, nor precipitates his course,
But many a benefit borne upon his breast

For human-kind sinks out of sight, is
gone,

No one knows how; nor seldom is put
forth 319

An angry arm that snatches good away,
Never perhaps to reappear. The Stream

Has to our generation brought and brings
Innumerable gains; yet we, who now

Walk in the light of day, pertain full
surely 324

To a chilled age, most pitiaibly shut out
From that which is and actuates, by forms,
Abstractions, and by lifeless fact to fact

Minutely linked with diligence unin-
spired,

Unrectified, unguided, unsustained,
By godlike insight. To this fate is
doomed 330

Science, wide-spread and spreading still
as be

Her conquests, in the world of sense made
known.

So with the internal mind it fares; and so
With morals, trusting, in contempt or
fear

Of vital principle's controlling law, 335
To her purblind guide Expediency; and so
Suffers religious faith. Elate with view

Of what is won, we overlook or scorn
The best that should keep pace with it,
and must,

Else more and more the general mind
will droop, 340

Even as if bent on perishing. There lives
No faculty within us which the Soul

Can spare, and humblest earthly Weal
demands,

For dignity not placed beyond her reach,
Zealous co-operation of all means 345

Given or acquired, to raise us from the
mire,

And liberate our hearts from low pur-
suits.

By gross Utilities enslaved we need 348
More of ennobling impulse from the past,
If to the future aught of good must come

Sounder and therefore holier than the ends
Which, in the giddiness of self-applause,
We covet as supreme. O grant the crown

That Wisdom wears, or take his treacher-
ous staff

From Knowledge!—If the Muse, whom
I have served 355

This day, be mistress of a single pearl

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN ITALY, 1837

Fit to be placed in that pure diadem;
 Then, not in vain, under these chestnut
 boughs
 Reclined, shall I have yielded up my soul
 To transports from the secondary founts
 Flowing of time and place, and paid to
 both
 Due homage; nor shall fruitlessly have
 striven,
 By love of beauty moved, to enshrine in
 verse
 Accordant meditations, which in times
 Vexed and disordered, as our own, may
 shed
 Influence, at least among a scattered few,
 To soberness of mind and peace of heart
 Friendly; as here to my repose hath been
 This flowering broom's dear neighbour-
 hood, the light
 And murmur issuing from yon pendent
 flood,
 And all the varied landscape. Let us now
 Rise, and to-morrow greet magnificent
 Rome.¹

II

THE PINE OF MONTE MARIO AT ROME

I SAW far off the dark top of a Pine
 Look like a cloud—a slender stem the tie
 That bound it to its native earth—poised
 high
 'Mid evening hues, along the horizon line,
 Striving in peace each other to out-
 shine.
 But when I learned the Tree was living there,
 Saved from the sordid axe by Beaumont's
 care,
 Oh, what a gush of tenderness was mine!
 The rescued Pine-tree, with its sky so
 bright
 And cloud-like beauty, rich in thoughts
 of home,
 Death-parted friends, and days too swift
 in flight,
 Supplanted the whole majesty of Rome
 (Then first apparent from the Pincian
 Height)
 Crowned with St. Peter's everlasting
 Dome.²

III

AT ROME

Is this, ye Gods, the Capitoline Hill?
 Yon petty Steep in truth the fearful Rock,
 Tarpeian named of yore, and keeping
 still
 That name, a local Phantom proud to
 mock
 The Traveller's expectation?—Could our
 Will
 Destroy the ideal Power within, 'twere done
 Thro' what men see and touch,—slaves
 wandering on,

¹ See Note, p. 708.

² See Note, p. 208.

Impelled by thirst of all but Heaven-
 taught skill.
 Full oft, our wish obtained, deeply we
 sigh;
 Yet not unrecompensed are they who
 learn,
 From that depression raised, to mount on
 high
 With stronger wing, more clearly to dis-
 cern
 Eternal things; and, if need be, defy
 Change, with a brow not insolent, though
 stern.

IV

AT ROME.—REGRETS.—IN ALLUSION TO NIEBUHR, AND OTHER MODERN HISTO- RIANS

THOSE old credulities, to nature dear,
 Shall they no longer bloom upon the stock
 Of History, stript naked as a rock
 'Mid a dry desert? What is it we hear?
 The glory of Infant Rome must dis-
 appear,
 Her morning splendours vanish, and their
 place
 Know them no more. If Truth, who
 veiled her face
 With those bright beams yet hid it not,
 must steer
 Henceforth a humbler course perplexed
 and slow;
 One solace yet remains for us who came
 Into this world in days when story lacked
 Severe research, that in our hearts we
 know
 How, for exciting youth's heroic flame,
 Assent is power, belief the soul of fact.

V

CONTINUED

COMPLACENT Fictions were they, yet the
 same
 Involved a history of no doubtful sense,
 History that proves by inward evidence
 From what a precious source of truth it
 came.
 Ne'er could the boldest Eulogist have
 dared
 Such deeds to paint, such characters to
 frame,
 But for coeval sympathy prepared
 To greet with instant faith their loftiest
 claim.
 None but a noble people could have loved
 Flattery in Ancient Rome's pure-minded
 style:
 Not in like sort the Runic Scald was
 moved;
 He, nursed 'mid savage passions that
 defile
 Humanity, sang feats that well might call
 For the blood-thirsty mead of Odin's
 riotous Hall.

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VII

PLEA FOR THE HISTORIAN

FORBEAR to deem the Chronicler unwise,
Ungentle, or untouched by seemly ruth,
Who, gathering up all that Time's en-
vious tooth

Has spared of sound and grave realities,
Firmly rejects those dazzling flatteries,
Dear as they are to unsuspecting Youth,
That might have drawn down Clio from
the skies

To vindicate the majesty of truth.
Such was her office while she walked with
men,

A Muse, who, not unmindful of her Sire
All-ruling Jove, whate'er the theme might
be

Revered her Mother, sage Mnemosyne,
And taught her faithful servants how the
lyre

Should animate, but not mislead, the pen.¹

VIII

AT ROME

THEY—who have seen the noble Roman's
scorn

Break forth at thought of laying down
his head,

When the blank day is over, garreted
In his ancestral palace, where, from morn
To night, the desecrated floors are worn
By feet of purse-proud strangers; they—
who have read

In one meek smile, beneath a peasant's
shed,

How patiently the weight of wrong is
borne;

They—who have heard some learned
Patriot treat

Of freedom, with mind grasping the whole
theme

From ancient Rome, downwards through
that bright dream

Of Commonwealths, each city a starlike
seat

Of rival glory; they—fallen Italy—
Nor must, nor will, nor can, despair of
Thee!

VIII

NEAR ROME, IN SIGHT OF ST. PETER'S

LONG has the dew been dried on tree and
lawn;

O'er man and beast a not unwelcome boon
Is shed, the languor of approaching noon;
To shady rest withdrawing or withdrawn
Mute are all creatures, as this couchant
fawn,

Save insect-swarms that hum in air afloat,
Save that the Cock is crowing, a shrill
note,

¹ Quem virum—lyra—
—sumes celebrare Clio?

Startling and shrill as that which roused
the dawn.

—Heard in that hour, or when, as now,
the nerve

Shrinks from the note as from a mis-
timed thing,

Of for a holy warning may it serve,
Charged with remembrance of his sudden
sting,

His bitter tears, whose name the Papal
Chair

And yon resplendent Church are proud
to bear.

IX

AT ALBANO

DAYS passed—and Monte Calvo would
not clear

His head from mist; and, as the wind
sobbed through

Albano's dripping Ilex avenue,
My dull forebodings in a Peasant's ear
Found casual vent. She said, 'Be of good
cheer;

Our yesterday's procession did not sue
In vain; the sky will change to sunny
blue,

Thanks to our Lady's grace.' I smiled
to hear,

But not in scorn:—the Matron's Faith
may lack

The heavenly sanction needed to ensure
Fulfilment; but, we trust, her upward
track

Stops not at this low point, nor wants
the lure

Of flowers the Virgin without fear may
own,

For by her Son's blest hand the seed was
sown.

X

NEAR Anio's stream I spied a gentle Dove
Perched on an olive branch, and heard
her cooing

'Mid new-born blossoms that soft airs
were wooing,

While all things present told of joy and
love.

But restless Fancy left that olive grove
To hail the exploratory Bird renewing
Hope for the few, who, at the world's
undoing,

On the great flood were spared to live and
move.

O bounteous Heaven! signs true as dove
and bough

Brought to the ark are coming evermore,
Given though we seek them not, but,
while we plough

This sea of life without a visible shore,
Do neither promise ask nor grace implore
In what alone is ours, the living Now.

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XI

FROM THE ALBAN HILLS, LOOKING
TOWARDS ROME

FORGIVE, illustrious Country! these deep
sighs,
Heaved less for thy bright plains and hills
bestrown
With monuments decayed or overthrown,
For all that tottering stands or prostrate
lies,
Than for like scenes in moral vision
shown,
Ruin perceived for keener sympathies;
Faith crushed, yet proud of weeds, her
gaudy crown;
Virtues laid low, and mouldering energies.
Yet why prolong this mournful strain?—
Fallen Power,
Thy fortunes, twice exalted, might pro-
voke
Verse to glad notes prophetic of the hour
When thou, uprisen, shalt break thy
double yoke,
And enter, with prompt aid from the Most
High,
On the third stage of thy great destiny.

XII

NEAR THE LAKE OF THRASYMENE

WHEN here with Carthage Rome to con-
flict came,
An earthquake, mingling with the battle's
shock,
Checked not its rage; unfelt the ground
did rock,
Sword dropped not, javelin kept its
deadly aim.—
Now all is sun-bright peace. Of that day's
shame,
Or glory, not a vestige seems to endure,
Save in this Rill that took from blood the
name!
Which yet it bears, sweet Stream! as
crystal pure.
So may all trace and sign of deeds aloof
From the true guidance of humanity,
Thro' Time and Nature's influence, purify
Their spirit; or, unless they for reproof
Or warning serve, thus let them all, on
ground
That gave them being, vanish to a sound.

XIII

NEAR THE SAME LAKE

FOR action born, existing to be tried,
Powers manifold we have that intervene
To stir the heart that would too closely
screen
Her peace from images to pain allied.
What wonder if at midnight, by the side
Of Sanguinetto or broad Thrasymane,

¹ Sanguinetto.

The clang of arms is heard, and phantoms
glide,
Unhappy ghosts in troops by moonlight
seen;
And singly thine, O vanquished Chief!
whose corse,
Unburied, lay hid under heaps of slain:
But who is He—the Conqueror? Would
he force
His way to Rome? Ah, no,—round hill
and plain
Wandering, he haunts, at fancy's strong
command,
This spot—his shadowy death-cup in his
hand.

XIV

THE CUCKOO AT LAVERNA

MAY 25, 1837

[Composed June, July, 1837.—Published: vol. of
1842.]

LIST—'twas the Cuckoo.—O with what
delight
Heard I that voice! and catch it now,
though faint,
Far off and faint, and melting into air,
Yet not to be mistaken. Hark again!
Those louder cries give notice that the
Bird,
Although invisible as Echo's self,
Is wheeling hitherward. Thanks, happy
Creature,
For this unthought-of greeting!
While allured
From vale to hill, from hill to vale led on,
We have pursued, through various lands,
a long
And pleasant course; flower after flower
has blown,
Embellishing the ground that gave them
birth
With aspects novel to my sight; but still
Most fair, most welcome, when they
drank the dew
In a sweet fellowship with kinds beloved,
For old remembrance sake. And oft—
where Spring
Displayed her richest blossoms among
files
Of orange-trees bedecked with glowing
fruit
Ripe for the hand, or under a thick shade
Of Ilex, or, if better suited to the hour,
The lightsome Olive's twinkling canopy—
Oft have I heard the Nightingale and
Thrush
Blending as in a common English grove
Their love-songs; but, where'er my feet
might roam,
Whate'er assemblages of new and old,
Strange and familiar, might beguile the
way,
A gratulation from that vagrant Voice
Was wanting;—and most happily till now.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN ITALY, 1837

For see, Laverna! mark the far-famed
 Pile,
 High on the brink of that precipitous
 rock,
 Implanted like a Fortress, as in truth
 It is, a Christian Fortress, garrisoned
 In faith and hope, and dutiful obedience,
 By a few Monks, a stern society,
 Dead to the world and scorning earth-
 born joys.
 Nay—though the hopes that drew, the
 fears that drove,
 St. Francis, far from Man's resort, to abide
 Among these sterile heights of Apennine,
 Bound him, nor, since he raised yon
 House, have ceased
 To bind his spiritual Progeny, with rules
 Stringent as flesh can tolerate and live;
 His milder Genius (thanks to the good God
 That made us) over those severe restraints
 Of mind, that dread heart-freezing disci-
 pline,
 Doth sometimes here predominate, and
 works
 By unsought means for gracious purposes;
 For earth through heaven, for heaven, by
 changeful earth,
 Illustrated, and mutually endeared.

Rapt though He were above the power
 of sense,
 Familiarly, yet out of the cleansed heart
 Of that once sinful Being overflowed
 On sun, moon, stars, the nether elements,
 And every shape of creature they sustain,
 Divine affections; and with beast and bird
 (Stilled from afar—such marvel story
 tells—
 By casual outbreak of his passionate
 words,
 And from their own pursuits in field or
 grove
 Drawn to his side by look or act of love
 Humane, and virtue of his innocent life)
 He went to hold companionship so free,
 So pure, so fraught with knowledge and
 delight,
 As to be likened in his Followers' minds
 To that which our first Parents, ere the fall
 From their high state darkened the Earth
 with fear,
 Held with all Kinds in Eden's blissful
 bowers.

Then question not that, 'mid the austere
 Band,
 Who breathe the air he breathed, tread
 where he trod,
 Some true Partakers of his loving spirit
 Do still survive, and, with those gentle
 hearts
 Consorted, Others, in the power, the
 faith,
 Of a baptized imagination, prompt

To catch from Nature's humblest moni-
 tors
 Whate'er they bring of impulses sublime.

Thus sensitive must be the Monk,
 though pale
 With fasts, with vigils worn, depressed by
 years,
 Whom in a sunny glade I chanced to see,
 Upon a pine-tree's storm-uprooted trunk,
 Seated alone, with forehead sky-ward
 raised,
 Hands clasped above the crucifix he wore
 Appended to his bosom, and lips closed
 By the joint pressure of his musing mood
 And habit of his vow. That ancient
 Man—
 Nor haply less the Brother whom I
 marked,
 As we approached the Convent gate, aloft
 Looking far forth from his aerial cell,
 A young Ascetic—Poet, Hero, Sage,
 He might have been, Lover belike he was—
 If they received into a conscious ear
 The notes whose first faint greeting
 startled me,
 Whose sedulous iteration thrilled with
 joy
 My heart—may have been moved like me
 to think,
 Ah! not like me who walk in the world's
 ways,
 On the great Prophet, styled *the Voice*
of One
Crying amid the wilderness, and given,
 Now that their snows must melt, their
 herbs and flowers
 Revive, their obstinate winter pass away,
 That awful name to Thee, thee, simple
 Cuckoo,
 Wandering in solitude, and evermore
 Foretelling and proclaiming, ere thou
 leave
 This thy last haunt beneath Italian skies
 To carry thy glad tidings over heights
 Still loftier, and to climes more near the
 Pole.

Voice of the Desert, fare-thee-well;
 sweet Bird!
 If that substantial title please thee more,
 Farewell!—but go thy way, no need hast
 thou
 Of a good wish sent after thee: from bower
 To bower as green, from sky to sky as
 clear,
 Thee gentle breezes waft—or airs that
 meet
 Thy course and sport around thee softly
 fan—
 Till Night, descending upon hill and vale,
 Grants to thy mission a brief term of
 silence,
 And folds thy pinions up in blest repose.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN ITALY, 1837

XV

AT THE CONVENT OF CAMALDOLI

GRIEVE for the Man who hither came
bereft,
And seeking consolation from above;
Nor grieve the less that skill to him was left
To paint this picture of his lady-love:
Can she, a blessed saint, the work ap-
prove?

And O, good Brethren of the cowl, a thing
So fair, to which with peril he must cling,
Destroy in pity, or with care remove.
That bloom—those eyes—can they assist

to bind
Thoughts that would stray from Heaven?

The dream must cease
To be; by Faith, not sight, his soul must
live;

Else will the enamoured Monk too surely
find

How wide a space can part from inward
peace

The most profound repose his cell can give.

XVI

CONTINUED

THE world forsaken, all its busy cares
And stirring interests shunned with
desperate flight,

All trust abandoned in the healing might
Of virtuous action; all that courage dares,
Labour accomplishes, or patience bears—
Those helps rejected, they, whose minds
perceive

How subtly works man's weakness, sighs
may heave

For such a One beset with cloistral snares.
Father of Mercy! rectify his view,
If with his vows this object ill agree; 10
Shed over it Thy grace, and thus subdue
Imperious passion in a heart set free:—
That earthly love may to herself be true,
Give him a soul that cleaveth unto Thee.

XVII

AT THE EREMIT OF UPPER CONVENT OF CAMALDOLI

WHAT aim had they, the Pair of Monks,
in size

Enormous, dragged, while side by side
they sate,

By panting steers up to this convent gate?
How, with empurpled cheeks and pam-
pered eyes,

Dare they confront the lean austerities 5
Of Brethren who, here fixed, on Jesu wait
In sackcloth, and God's anger deprecate
Through all that humbles flesh and mor-
tifies?

Strange contrast!—verily the world of
dreams,

¹ See Note, p. 709.

Where mingle, as for mockery combined,
Things in their very essences at strife, 11
Shows not a sight incongruous as the
extremes

That everywhere, before the thoughtful
mind,

Meet on the solid ground of waking life.¹

XVIII

AT VALLOMBROSA

Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks
In Vallombrosa, where Etrurian shades
High over-arch'd embower.²

PARADISE LOST.

'VALLOMBROSA—I longed in thy shadiest
wood

To slumber, reclined on the moss-covered
floor!'

Fond wish that was granted at last, and
the Flood,

That lulled me asleep, bids me listen once
more.

Its murmur how soft! as it falls down the
steep, 5

Near that Cell—yon sequestered Retreat
high in air—

Where our Milton was wont lonely vigils
to keep

For converse with God, sought through
study and prayer.

The Monks still repeat the tradition with
pride,

And its truth who shall doubt? for his
Spirit is here; 10

In the cloud-piercing rocks doth her
grandeur abide,

In the pines pointing heavenward her
beauty austere;

In the flower-besprent meadows his genius
we trace

Turned to humbler delights, in which
youth might confide,

That would yield him fit help while pre-
figuring that Place 15

Where, if Sin had not entered, Love never
had died.

When with life lengthened out came a
desolate time,

And darkness and danger had compassed
him round,

With a thought he would flee to these
haunts of his prime,

And here once again a kind shelter be
found. 20

And let me believe that when nightly the
Muse

Did waft him to Sion, the glorified hill,
Here also, on some favoured height, he

would choose
To wander, and drink inspiration at will.

¹ See Note, p. 709.

² See for the two first lines, 'Stanzas composed in the Simplicon Pass', p. 273.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN ITALY, 1837

Vallombrosa! of thee I first heard in the
 Of that holiest of Bards, and the name for
 my mind
 Had a musical charm, which the winter
 of age
 And the changes it brings had no power
 to unbind.
 And now, ye Miltonian shades! under
 you
 I repose, nor am forced from sweet fancy
 to part,
 While your leaves I behold and the brooks
 they will strew,
 And the realised vision is clasped to my
 heart.

Even so, and unblamed, we rejoice as we
 may
 In Forms that must perish, frail objects
 of sense;
 Unblamed—if the Soul be intent on the
 day
 When the Being of Beings shall summon
 her hence.
 For he and he only with wisdom is blest
 Who, gathering true pleasures wherever
 they grow,
 Looks up in all places, for joy or for rest,
 To the Fountain whence Time and
 Eternity flow.

XIX

AT FLORENCE

UNDER the shadow of a stately Pile,
 The dome of Florence, pensive and alone,
 Nor giving heed to aught that passed the
 while,
 I stood, and gazed upon a marble stone,
 The laurelled Dante's favourite seat. A
 throne,
 In just esteem, it rivals; though no style
 Be there of decoration to beguile
 The mind, depressed by thought of great-
 ness flown.
 As a true man, who long had served the
 lyre,
 I gazed with earnestness, and dared no
 more.
 But in his breast the mighty Poet bore
 A Patriot's heart, warm with undying fire.
 Bold with the thought, in reverence I sate
 down,
 And, for a moment, filled that empty
 Throne.

XX

BEFORE THE PICTURE OF THE BAPTIST, BY
 RAPHAEL, IN THE GALLERY AT FLORENCE
 The Baptist might have been ordained to
 cry
 Forth from the towers of that huge Pile,
 wherein
 His Father served Jehovah; but how win

Due audience, how for aught but scorn
 defy
 The obstinate pride and wanton revelry
 Of the Jerusalem below, her sin
 And folly, if they with united din
 Drown not at once mandate and pro-
 phesy?
 Therefore the Voice spake from the
 Desert, thence
 To Her, as to her opposite in peace,
 Silence, and holiness, and innocence,
 To Her and to all Lands its warning sent,
 Crying with earnestness that might not
 cease,
 'Make straight a highway for the Lord—
 repent!'

XXI

AT FLORENCE.—FROM MICHAEL ANGELO¹
 RAPT above earth by power of one fair
 face,
 Hers in whose sway alone my heart de-
 lights,
 I mingle with the blest on those pure
 heights
 Where Man, yet mortal, rarely finds a
 place.
 With Him who made the Work that Work
 accords
 So well, that by its help and through His
 grace
 I raise my thoughts, inform my deeds and
 words,
 Clasp her beauty in my soul's em-
 brace.
 Thus, if from two fair eyes mine cannot
 turn,
 I feel how in their presence doth abide
 Light which to God is both the way and
 guide;
 And, kindling at their lustre, if I burn,
 My noble fire emits the joyful ray
 That through the realms of glory shines
 for aye.

XXII

AT FLORENCE.—FROM MICHAEL ANGELO
 ETERNAL Lord! eased of a cumbrous load,
 And loosened from the world, I turn to
 Thee;
 Shun, like a shattered bark, the storm,
 and flee
 To Thy protection for a safe abode.
 The crown of thorns, hands pierced upon
 the tree,

¹ This and the following Sonnet may possibly have been two of the fifteen Sonnets which in 1805 Wordsworth essayed to translate from the Italian of Michael Angelo. A rough draft of No. xxii is given by Mr. Dykes Campbell from a notebook belonging to S. T. Coleridge. See Coleridge's *Poetical Works*, p. 474. Mr. Campbell, unfortunately, does not give the date of the entry, or of the note-book.—ED.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN ITALY, 1837

The meek, benign, and lacerated face,
To a sincere repentance promise grace,
To the sad soul give hope of pardon free.
With justice mark not Thou, O Light
divine,
My fault, nor hear it with Thy sacred
ear;
Neither put forth that way Thy arm
severe;
Wash with Thy blood my sins; thereto
incline
More readily the more my years require
Help, and forgiveness speedy and entire.

XXIII

AMONG THE RUINS OF A CONVENT IN THE APENNINES

YE Trees! whose slender roots entwine
Altars that piety neglects;
Whose infant arms enclasp the shrine
Which no devotion now respects;
If not a straggler from the herd
Here ruminate, nor shrouded bird,
Chanting her low-voiced hymn, take pride
In aught that ye would grace or hide—
How sadly is your love misplaced,
Fair Trees, your bounty run to waste! 10

Ye, too, wild Flowers! that no one heeds,
And ye—full often spurned as weeds—
In beauty clothed, or breathing sweetness
From fractured arch and mouldering
wall—
Do but more touchingly recall 15
Man's headstrong violence and Time's
fleetness,
Making the precincts ye adorn
Appear to sight still more forlorn.

XXIV

IN LOMBARDY

SEE, where his difficult way that Old Man
wins
Bent by a load of Mulberry leaves!—most
hard
Appears *his* lot, to the small Worm's
compared,
For whom his toil with early day begins.
Acknowledging no task-master, at will 5
(As if her labour and her ease were twins)
She seems to work, at pleasure to lie
still,—
And softly sleeps within the thread she
spins.
So fare they—the Man serving as her
Slave.
Ere long their fates do each to each con-
form: 10
Both pass into new being,—but the Worm,
Transfigured, sinks into a hopeless grave;
His volent Spirit will, he trusts, ascend
To bliss unbounded, glory without end.

XXV

AFTER LEAVING ITALY

FAIR Land! Thee all men greet with joy;
how few,
Whose souls take pride in freedom, virtue,
fame,
Part from thee without pity dyed in
shame:
I could not—while from Venice we with-
drew,
Led on till an Alpine strait confined our
view 5
Within its depths, and to the shore we came
Of Lago Morto, dreary sight and name,
Which o'er sad thoughts a sadder colour-
ing threw.
Italia! on the surface of thy spirit,
(Too aptly emblemized by that torpid lake)
Shall a few partial breezes only creep?—11
Be its depths quickened; what thou dost
inherit
Of the world's hopes, dare to fulfil; awake,
Mother of Heroes, from thy death-like
sleep!

XXVI

CONTINUED

As indignation mastered grief, my tongue
Spake bitter words; words that did ill
agree
With those rich stores of Nature's
imagery,
And divine Art, that fast to memory
clung— 4
Thy gifts, magnificent Region, ever young
In the sun's eye, and in his sister's sight
How beautiful! how worthy to be sung
In strains of rapture, or subdued delight!
I feign not; witness that unwelcome shock
That followed the first sound of German
speech, 10
Caught the far-winding barrier Alps
among.
In that announcement, greeting seemed
to mock
Parting; the casual word had power to
reach
My heart, and filled that heart with con-
flict strong.

XXVII

COMPOSED AT RYDAL ON MAY MORNING, 1838

[Composed May 1, 1838.—Published: Sonnet-vol.
of 1838; vol. of 1842.]

If with old love of you, dear Hills! I share
New love of many a rival image brought
From far, forgive the wanderings of my
thought:
Nor art thou wronged, sweet May! when
I compare
Thy present birth-morn with thy last, so
fair, 5

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN ITALY, 1837

So rich to me in favours. For my lot
Then was, within the famed Egerian Grot
To sit and muse, fanned by its dewy air
Mingling with thy soft breath! That
morning too,
Warblers I heard their joy unbosoming
Amid the sunny, shadowy, Colosseum;
Heard them, unchecked by aught of sad-
dening hue,
For victories there won by flower-crowned
Spring,
Chant in full choir their innocent Te
Deum.

XXVIII

THE PILLAR OF TRAJAN

[Composed 1825.—Published 1827.¹]

WHERE towers are crushed, and unfor-
bidden weeds
O'er mutilated arches shed their seeds;
And temples, doomed to milder change,
unfold
A new magnificence that vies with old;
Firm in its pristine majesty hath stood
A votive Column, spared by fire and
flood:—
And, though the passions of man's fretful
race
Have never ceased to eddy round its base,
Not injured more by touch of meddling
hands
Than a lone obelisk, 'mid Nubian sands,
Or aught in Syrian deserts left to save
From death the memory of the good and
brave.
Historic figures round the shaft embost
Ascend, with lineaments in air not lost:
Still as he turns, the charmed spectator
sees
Group winding after group with dream-
like ease;
Triumphs in sun-bright gratitude dis-
played,
Or softly stealing into modest shade.
—So, pleased with purple clusters to en-
twine
Some lofty elm-tree, mounts the daring
vine;
The woodbine so, with spiral grace, and
breathes
Wide-spreading odours from her flowery
wreaths.

Borne by the Muse from rills in shep-
herds' ears
Murmuring but one smooth story for all
years,

I gladly commune with the mind and
heart
Of him who thus survives by classic art,
His actions witness, venerate his mien,
And study Trajan as by Pliny seen;
Behold how fought the Chief whose con-
quering sword
Stretched far as earth might own a single
lord;
In the delight of moral prudence schooled,
How feelingly at home the Sovereign
ruled;
Best of the good—in pagan faith allied
To more than Man, by virtue deified.

Memorial Pillar! 'mid the wrecks of
Time
Preserve thy charge with confidence
sublime—
The exultations, pomps, and cares of
Rome,
Whence half the breathing world received
its doom;
Things that recoil from language; that,
if shown
By apter pencil, from the light had flown.
A Pontiff, Trajan *here* the Gods implores,
There greets an Embassy from Indian
shores;
Lo! he harangues his cohorts—*there* the
storm
Of battle meets him in authentic form!
Unharnessed, naked, troops of Moorish
horse
Sweep to the charge; more high, the
Dacian force,
To hoof and finger mailed;—yet, high or
low,
None bleed, and none lie prostrate but
the foe;
In every Roman, through all turns of
fate,
Is Roman dignity inviolate;
Spirit in him pre-eminent, who guides,
Supports, adorns, and over all presides;
Distinguished only by inherent state
From honoured Instruments that round
him wait;
Rise as he may, his grandeur scorns the
test
Of outward symbol, nor will deign to rest
On aught by which another is deprest.
—Alas! that One thus disciplined could
toil
To enslave whole nations on their native
soil;
So emulous of Macedonian fame,
That, when his age was measured with his
aim,
He drooped, 'mid else unclouded victories,
And turned his eagles back with deep-
drawn sighs:
O weakness of the Great! O folly of the
Wise!

¹ Included among *Poems of Sentiment and Reflection* in edd. 1827–43. First placed in this Series in ed. 1845. The preceding Sonnet (xxvii) was included amongst the *Miscellaneous Sonnets* in the volume of 1842, and first found its present place in ed. 1845.

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN ITALY, 1837

Where now the haughty Empire that
 was spread⁶⁵
 With such fond hope? her very speech is
 dead;
 Yet glorious Art the power of Time⁷⁰
 defies,
 And Trajan still, through various enter-
 prise,
 Mounts, in this fine illusion, toward the
 skies:
 Still are we present with the imperial
 Chief,
 Nor cease to gaze upon the bold Relief
 Till Rome, to silent marble unconfined,
 Becomes with all her years a vision of the
 Mind.

THE EGYPTIAN MAID

OR

THE ROMANCE OF THE WATER LILY

[Composed 1830.—Published 1835.]

For the names and persons in the following poem see the 'History of the renowned Prince Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table;' for the rest the Author is answerable; only it may be proper to add that the Lotus, with the bust of the Goddess appearing to rise out of the full-blown flower, was suggested by the beautiful work of ancient art, once included among the Townley Marbles, and now in the British Museum.

WHILE Merlin paced the Cornish sands,
 Forth-looking toward the rocks of
 Scilly,
 The pleased Enchanter was aware
 Of a bright Ship that seemed to hang in
 air,
 Yet was she work of mortal hands,⁵
 And took from men her name—THE
 WATER LILY.

Soft was the wind, that landward blew;
 And, as the Moon, o'er some dark hill
 ascendant,
 Grows from a little edge of light
 To a full orb, this Pinnacle bright¹⁰
 Became, as nearer to the coast she drew,
 More glorious, with spread sail and
 streaming pendant.

Upon this winged Shape so fair
 Sage Merlin gazed with admiration:
 Her lineaments, thought he, surpass
 Aught that was ever shown in magic
 glass;¹⁶
 Was ever built with patient care;
 Or, at a touch, produced by happiest
 transformation.

Now, though a Mechanist, whose skill
 Shames the degenerate grasp of modern
 science,²⁰
 Grave Merlin (and belike the more
 For practising occult and perilous lore)
 Was subject to a freakish will
 That sapped good thoughts, or scared
 them with defiance.

Provoked to envious spleen, he cast
 An altered look upon the advancing
 Stranger²⁶
 Whom he had hailed with joy, and cried,

'My Art shall help to tame her pride—'
 Anon the breeze became a blast,
 And the waves rose, and sky portended
 danger.³⁰

With thrilling word, and potent sign
 Traced on the beach, his work the Sor-
 cerer urges;
 The clouds in blacker clouds are lost,
 Like spiteful Fiends that vanish, crossed
 By Fiends of aspect more malign;³⁵
 And the winds roused the Deep with
 fiercer scourges.

But worthy of the name she bore
 Was this Sea-flower, this buoyant
 Galley;
 Supreme in loveliness and grace
 Of motion, whether in the embrace⁴⁰
 Of trusty anchorage, or scudding o'er
 The main flood roughened into hill and
 valley.

Behold, how wantonly she laves
 Her sides, the Wizard's craft confound-
 ing;
 Like something out of Ocean sprung
 To be for ever fresh and young,⁴⁶
 Breasts the sea-flashes, and huge waves
 Top-gallant high, rebounding and re-
 bounding!

But Ocean under magic heaves,
 And cannot spare the Thing he
 cherished:⁵⁰
 Ah! what avails that she was fair,
 Luminous, blithe, and debonair?
 The storm has stripped her of her
 leaves;
 The Lily floats no longer!—She hath
 perished.

THE EGYPTIAN MAID

Grieve for her, she deserves no less; 55
 So like, yet so unlike, a living Creature!
 No heart had she, no busy brain;
 Though loved, she could not love again;
 Though pitied, *feel* her own distress;
 Nor aught that troubles us, the fools of
 Nature. 60

Yet is there cause for gushing tears;
 So richly was this Galley laden,
 A fairer than herself she bore,
 And, in her struggles, cast ashore;
 A lovely One, who nothing hears 65
 Of wind or wave—a meek and guileless
 Maiden.

Into a cave had Merlin fled
 From mischief, caused by spells himself
 had muttered;
 And while, repentant all too late,
 In moody posture there he sate, 70
 He heard a voice, and saw, with half-
 raised head,

A Visitant by whom these words were
 uttered:—

'On Christian service this frail Bark
 Sailed' (hear me, Merlin!) 'under high
 protection,
 Though on her prow a sign of heathen
 power 75
 Was carved—a Goddess with a Lily
 flower.

The old Egyptian's emblematic mark
 Of joy immortal and of pure affection.

'Her course was for the British strand;
 Her freight, it was a Damsel peerless;
 God reigns above, and Spirits strong
 May gather to avenge this wrong 82
 Done to the Princess, and her Land
 Which she in duty left, sad but not cheer-
 less.

'And to Caerleon's loftiest tower 85
 Soon will the Knights of Arthur's Table
 A cry of lamentation send;
 And all will weep who there attend,
 To grace that Stranger's bridal hour,
 For whom the sea was made unnavigable.

'Shame! should a Child of royal line
 Die through the blindness of thy
 malice?' 92

Thus to the Necromancer spake
 Nina, the Lady of the Lake,
 A gentle Sorceress, and benign, 95
 Who ne'er embittered any good man's
 chalice.

'What boots,' continued she, 'to
 mourn?
 To expiate thy sin endeavour: 98
 From the bleak isle where she is laid,
 Fetched by our art, the Egyptian Maid
 May yet to Arthur's court be borne
 Cold as she is, ere life be fled for ever.

'My pearly Boat, a shining Light, 103
 That brought me down that sunless river,
 Will bear me on from wave to wave,
 And back with her to this sea-cave;—
 Then Merlin! for a rapid flight
 Through air, to thee my Charge will I
 deliver.

'The very swiftest of thy cars 109
 Must, when my part is done, be ready;
 Meanwhile, for further guidance, look
 Into thy own prophetic book;
 And, if that fail, consult the Stars
 To learn thy course; farewell! be prompt
 and steady.'

This scarcely spoken, she again 115
 Was seated in her gleaming shallop,
 That, o'er the yet-distempered Deep,
 Pursued its way with bird-like sweep,
 Or like a steed, without a rein,
 Urged o'er the wilderness in sportive
 gallop. 120

Soon did the gentle Nina reach
 That Isle without a house or haven;
 Landing, she found not what she
 sought,
 Nor saw of wreck or ruin aught 124
 But a carved Lotus cast upon the beach
 By the fierce waves, a flower in marble
 graven.

Sad relique, but how fair the while!
 For gently each from each retreating
 With backward curve, the leaves re-
 vealed 129
 The bosom half, and half concealed,
 Of a Divinity, that seemed to smile
 On Nina, as she passed, with hopeful
 greeting.

No quest was hers of vague desire,
 Of tortured hope and purpose shaken!
 Following the margin of a bay, 135
 She spied the lonely Cast-away,
 Unmarried, unstripped of her attire,
 But with closed eyes,—of breath and
 bloom forsaken.

Then Nina, stooping down, embraced,
 With tenderness and mild emotion, 140
 The Damsel, in that trance embound;
 And, while she raised her from the
 ground,
 And in the pearly shallop placed,
 Sleep fell upon the air, and stilled the ocean.

The turmoil hushed, celestial springs
 Of music opened, and there came a
 blending 146
 Of fragrance, underived from earth,
 With gleams that owed not to the sun
 their birth,
 And that soft rustling of invisible wings
 Which Angels make, on works of love
 descending. 150

THE EGYPTIAN MAID

And Nina heard a sweeter voice
 Than in the Goddess of the flower had
 spoken:
 'Thou hast achieved, fair Dame! what
 none
 Less pure in spirit could have done;
 Go, in thy enterprise rejoice! 155
 Air, earth, sea, sky, and heaven, success
 betoken.'
 So cheered, she left that Island bleak,
 A bare rock of the Scilly cluster;
 And, as they traversed the smooth brine,
 The self-illuminated Brigantine 160
 Shed, on the Slumberer's cold wan cheek
 And pallid brow, a melancholy lustre.
 Fleet was their course, and when they
 came
 To the dim cavern, whence the river
 Issued into the salt-sea flood, 165
 Merlin, as fixed in thought he stood,
 Was thus accosted by the Dame:
 'Behold to thee my Charge I now deliver!
 'But where attends thy chariot—
 where?'— 169
 Quoth Merlin, 'Even as I was bidden,
 So have I done; as trusty as thy barge
 My vehicle shall prove—O precious
 Charge!
 If this be sleep, how soft! if death, how
 fair!
 Much have my books disclosed, but the
 end is hidden.'
 He spake; and gliding into view 175
 Forth from the grotto's dimmest
 chamber
 Came two mute Swans, whose plumes
 of dusky white
 Changed, as the pair approached the
 light,
 Drawing an ebon car, their hue
 (Like clouds of sunset) into lucid amber.
 Once more did gentle Nina lift 181
 The Princess, passive to all changes:
 The car received her:—then up-went
 Into the ethereal element
 The Birds with progress smooth and
 swift 185
 As thought, when through bright regions
 memory ranges.
 Sage Merlin, at the Slumberer's side,
 Instructs the Swans their way to mea-
 sure;
 And soon Caerleon's towers appeared,
 And notes of minstrelsy were heard
 From rich pavilions spreading wide,
 For some high day of long-expected plea-
 sure. 192
 Awe-stricken stood both Knights and
 Dames
 Ere on firm ground the car alighted;
 Eftsoons astonishment was past, 195

For in that face they saw the last
 Last lingering look of clay, that tames
 All pride; by which all happiness is
 blighted.

Said Merlin: 'Mighty King, fair Lords,
 Away with feast and tilt and tourney!
 Ye saw, throughout this royal House,
 Ye heard, a rocking marvellous 202
 Of turrets, and a clash of swords
 Self-shaken, as I closed my airy journey.

Lo! by a destiny well known 205
 To mortals, joy is turned to sorrow;
 This is the wished-for Bride, the Maid
 Of Egypt, from a rock conveyed
 Where she by snipwreck had been
 thrown;
 Ill sight! but grief may vanish ere the
 morrow.' 210

'Though vast thy power, thy words are
 weak,
 Exclaimed the King, 'a mockery hate-
 ful;
 Dutiful Child, her lot how hard!
 Is this her piety's reward?
 Those watery locks, that bloodless
 cheek! 215
 O winds without remorse! O shore un-
 gratefull!

'Rich robes are fretted by the moth;
 Towers, temples, fall by stroke of
 thunder;
 Will that, or deeper thoughts, abate
 A Father's sorrow for her fate? 220
 He will repent him of his troth;
 His brain will burn, his stout heart split
 asunder.

'Alas! and I have caused this woe;
 For, when my prowess from invading
 Neighbours 224
 Had freed his Realm, he plighted word
 That he would turn to Christ our Lord,
 And his dear Daughter on a Knight
 bestow
 Whom I should choose for love and
 matchless labours.

'Her birth was heathen; but a fence
 Of holy Angels round her hovered: 230
 A Lady added to my court
 So fair, of such divine report
 And worship, seemed a recompense
 For fifty kingdoms by my sword re-
 covered.

'Ask not for whom, O Champions true!
 She was reserved by me her life's be-
 trayer; 236
 She who was meant to be a bride
 Is now a corse: then put aside
 Vain thoughts, and speed ye, with
 observance due
 Of Christian rites, in Christian ground to
 lay her.' 240

THE EGYPTIAN MAID

'The tomb,' said Merlin, 'may not
close
Upon her yet, earth hide her beauty;
Not froward to thy sovereign will
Esteem me, Liege! if I, whose skill
Wafted her hither, interpose 245
To check this pious haste of erring duty.

'My books command me to lay bare
The secret thou art bent on keeping:
Here must a high attest be given,
What Bridegroom was for her ordained
by Heaven: 250
And in my glass significant there are
Of things that may to gladness turn this
weeping.

'For this, approaching, One by One,
Thy Knights must touch the cold hand
of the Virgin;
So, for the favoured One, the Flower
may bloom 255
Once more: but, if unchangeable her
doom,
If life departed be for ever gone,
Some blest assurance, from this cloud
emerging,

'May teach him to bewail his loss;
Not with a grief that, like a vapour,
rises 260
And melts; but grief devout that shall
endure,
And a perpetual growth secure
Of purposes which no false thought
shall cross,
A harvest of high hopes and noble enter-
prises.'

'So be it,' said the King;—'anon, 265
Here, where the Princess lies, begin the
trial;
Knights each in order as ye stand
Step forth.'—To touch the pallid hand
Sir Agravaire advanced; no sign he
won
From Heaven or earth;—Sir Kaye had
like denial. 270

Abashed, Sir Dinas turned away;
Even for Sir Percival was no disclo-
sure;
Though he, devoutest of all Champions,
ere
He reached that ebon car, the bier
Whereon diffused like snow the Damsel
lay, 275
Full thrice had crossed himself in meek
composure.

Imagine (but ye Saints! who can?)
How in still air the balance trembled—
The wishes, peradventure the despites
That overcame some not ungenerous
Knights; 280

And all the thoughts that lengthened
out a span
Of time to Lords and Ladies thus as-
sembled.

What patient confidence was here!
And there how many bosoms panted!
While drawing toward the car Sir
Gawaine, mailed 285
For tournament, his beaver veiled,
And softly touched; but, to his princely
cheer
And high expectancy, no sign was
granted.

Next, disencumbered of his harp,
Sir Tristram, dear to thousands as a
brother, 290
Came to the proof, nor grieved that
there ensued
No change;—the fair Izonda he had
wooed
With love too true, a love with pangs
too sharp,
From hope too distant, not to dread
another.

Not so Sir Launcelot;—from Heaven's
grace 295
A sign he craved, tired slave of vain
contrition;
The royal Guinever looked passing glad
When his touch failed.—Next came
Sir Galahad;
He paused, and stood entranced by that
still face
Whose features he had seen in noontide
vision. 300

For late, as near a murmuring stream
He rested 'mid an arbour green and
shady,
Nina, the good Enchantress, shed
A light around his mossy bed;
And, at her call, a waking dream 305
Prefigured to his sense the Egyptian Lady.

Now, while his bright-haired front he
bowed,
And stood, far-kenned by mantle
furred with ermine,
As o'er the insensate Body hung
The enrapt, the beautiful, the young,
Belief sank deep into the crowd 311
That he the solemn issue would deter-
mine.

Nor deem it strange; the Youth had
worn
That very mantle on a day of glory,
The day when he achieved that match-
less feat, 315
The marvel of the PERILOUS SEAT,
Which whoso'er approached of
strength was shorn,
Though King or Knight the most re-
nowned in story.

THE EGYPTIAN MAID

- He touched with hesitating hand—
And lo! those Birds, far-famed through
Love's dominions, 320
The Swans, in triumph clap their
wings;
And their necks play, involved in rings,
Like sinless snakes in Eden's happy
land;—
- 'Mine is she,' cried the Knight;—again
they clapped their pinions.
- 'Mine was she—mine she is, though
dead, 325
And to her name my soul shall cleave
in sorrow;'
Whereat a tender twilight streak
Of colour dawned upon the Damsel's
cheek;
And her lips, quickening with uncertain
red,
Seemed from each other a faint warmth
to borrow. 330
- Deep was the awe, the rapture high,
Of love emboldened, hope with dread
entwining,
When, to the mouth, relenting Death
Allowed a soft and flower-like breath,
Precursor to a timid sigh, 335
To lifted eyelids, and a doubtful shining.
- In silence did King Arthur gaze
Upon the signs that pass away or tarry;
In silence watched the gentle strife
Of Nature leading back to life; 340
Then eased his soul at length by praise
Of God, and Heaven's pure Queen—the
blissful Mary.
- Then said he, 'Take her to thy heart,
Sir Galahad! a treasure, that God
giveth,
Bound by indissoluble ties to thee 345
Through mortal change and immor-
tality;
Be happy and unenvied, thou who art
A goodly Knight that hath no peer that
liveth!'
- Not long the Nuptials were delayed;
And sage tradition still rehearses 350
The pomp, the glory of that hour
When toward the altar from her bower
King Arthur led the Egyptian Maid,
And Angels carolled these far-echoed
verses;—
- Who shrinks not from alliance 355
Of evil with good Powers
To God proclaims defiance,
And mocks whom he adores.
- A Ship to Christ devoted
From the Land of Nile did go; 360
Alas! the bright Ship floated,
An Idol at her prow.
- By magic domination,
The Heaven-permitted vent
Of purblind mortal passion, 365
Was wrought her punishment.
- The Flower, the Form within it,
What served they in her need?
Her port she could not win it,
Nor from mishap be freed. 370
- The tempest overcame her,
And she was seen no more;
But gently, gently blame her—
She cast a Pearl ashore.
- The Maid to Jesu hearkened, 375
And kept to Him her faith,
Till sense in death was darkened,
Or sleep akin to death.
- But Angels round her pillow
Kept watch, a viewless band; 380
And, billow favouring billow,
She reached the destined strand.
- Blest Pair! whate'er befall you,
Your faith in Him approve
Who from frail earth can call you
To bowers of endless love! 386

THE RIVER DUDDON

A SERIES OF SONNETS¹

[Composed between 1806–1820.—Published 1820.]

The River Duddon rises upon Wrynose Fell, on the confines of Westmoreland, Cumberland, and Lancashire; and, having served as a boundary to the two last Counties for the space of about twenty-five miles, enters the Irish Sea, between the Isle of Walney and the Lordship of Millum.

TO THE REV. DR. WORDSWORTH (WITH THE SONNETS TO THE RIVER DUDDON, AND OTHER POEMS IN THIS COLLECTION, 1820).

[Composed Christmastide, 1819.—Published 1820.]

The Minstrels played their Christmas tune
To-night beneath my cottage-eaves;
While, smitten by a lofty moon,
The encircling laurels, thick with leaves,
Gave back a rich and dazzling sheen,
That overpowered their natural green.

Through hill and valley every breeze
Had sunk to rest with folded wings;
Keen was the air, but could not freeze,
Nor check, the music of the strings;
So stout and hardy were the band
That scraped the chords with strenuous hand!

And who but listened?—till was paid
Respect to every Innmate's claim:
The greeting given, the music played,
In honour of each household name,
Duly pronounced with lusty call.
And 'Merry Christmas' wished to all!

O Brother! I revere the choice
That took thee from thy native hills;
And it is given thee to rejoice:
Though public care full often talls
(Heaven only witness of the toil)
A barren and ungrateful soil.

Yet, would that Thou, with me and mine,
Hadst heard this never-failing rite;
And seen on other faces shine
A true revival of the light
Which Nature and these rustic Powers,
In simple childhood, spread through ours!

For pleasure hath not ceased to wait
On these expected annual rounds;
Whether the rich man's sumptuous gate
Call forth the unelaborate sounds,
Or they are offered at the door
That guards the lowliest of the poor.

How touching, when, at midnight, sweep
Snow-muffled winds, and all is dark,
To hear—and sink again to sleep!
Or, at an earlier call, to mark,
By blazing fire, the still suspense
Of self-complacent innocence;

The mutual nod,—the grave disguise
Of hearts with gladness brimming o'er;
And some unbidden tears that rise
For names once heard, and heard no more;
Tears brightened by the serenade
For infant in the cradle laid.

Ah! not for emerald fields alone,
With ambient streams more pure and bright
Than fabled Cytherea's zone
Glittering before the Thunderer's sight,
Is to my heart of hearts endeared
The ground where we were born and reared!

Hail, ancient Manners! sure defence,
Where they survive, of wholesome laws;
Remnants of love whose modest sense
Thus into narrow room withdraws;
Hail, Usages of pristine mould,
And ye that guard them, Mountains old!

Bear with me, Brother! quench the thought
That slights this passion, or condemns;
If thee fond Fancy ever brought
From the proud margin of the Thames,
And Lambeth's venerable towers,
To humbler streams, and greener bowers.

Yes, they can make, who fail to find,
Short leisure even in busiest days;
Moments, to cast a look behind,
And profit by those kindly rays
That through the clouds do sometimes steal,
And all the far-off past reveal.

Hence, while the imperial City's din
Beats frequent on thy satiate ear,
A pleased attention I may win
To agitations less severe,
That neither overwhelm, nor cloy,
But fill the hollow vale with joy!

I

NOT envying Latian shades—if yet they
throw

A grateful coolness round that crystal
Spring,

Bandusia, prattling as when long ago
The Sabine Bard was moved her praise to
sing;

Careless of flowers that in perennial blow
Round the moist marge of Persian
fountains cling;

¹ These Sonnets (No. xxvii excepted) appeared early in 1820, in a volume entitled *The River Duddon, A Series of Sonnets: Vaudracour and Julia: and other Poems. To which is annexed A Topographical Description of the Country of the Lakes, in the North of England.* They were written at various intervals between 1806 and 1820. Sonnet No. xiv (*O Mountain Stream!*) was written before April 1807, when it first appeared amongst the *Miscellaneous Sonnets*; and Sonnet No. xxvii (*Fallen, and diffused*) was published in 1819, along with *The Waggoner*; included, in the collective (4 vol.) ed. of 1820, amongst the *Miscellaneous Sonnets*; and, in ed. 1827, transferred to its present place in this Series.—ED.

THE RIVER DUDDON

IV

Heedless of Alpine torrents thundering
Through ice-built arches radiant as
heaven's bow;
I seek the birthplace of a native Stream.—
All hail, ye mountains! hail, thou morn-
ing light!¹⁰
Better to breathe at large on this clear
height
Than toil in needless sleep from dream to
dream:
Pure flow the verse, pure, vigorous, free,
and bright,
For Duddon, long-loved Duddon, is my
theme!

II

CHILD of the clouds! remote from every
taint
Of sordid industry thy lot is cast;
Thine are the honours of the lofty waste;
Not seldom, when with heat the valleys
faint,
Thy handmaid Frost with spangled tissue
quaint⁵
Thy cradle decks;—to chant thy birth,
thou hast
No meaner Poet than the whistling Blast,
And Desolation is thy Patron-saint!
She guards thee, ruthless Power! who
would not spare
Those mighty forests, once the bison's¹⁰
screen,
Where stalked the huge deer to his shaggy
lair!¹
Through paths and alleys roofed with
darkest green;
Thousands of years before the silent air
Was pierced by whizzing shaft of hunter
keen!

III

How shall I paint thee?—Be this naked
stone
My seat, while I give way to such intent;
Pleased could my verse, a speaking monu-
ment,
Make to the eyes of men thy features
known.⁴
But as of all those tripping lambs not one
Outruns his fellows, so hath Nature lent
To thy beginning nought that doth pre-
sent
Peculiar ground for hope to build upon.
To dignify the spot that gives thee birth
No sign of hoar Antiquity's esteem¹⁰
Appears, and none of modern Fortune's
care;
Yet thou thyself hast round thee shed
a gleam
Of brilliant moss, instinct with freshness
rare;
Prompt offering to thy Foster-mother,
Earth!

¹ The deer alluded to is the Leigh, a gigantic species long since extinct.

TAKE, cradled Nursling of the mountain,
take
This parting glance, no negligent adieu!
A Protean change seems wrought while I
pursue
The curves, a loosely-scattered chain doth
make;
Or rather thou appear'st a glistening snake,
Silent, and to the gazer's eye untrue,⁶
Thridding with sinuous lapse the rushes,
through
Dwarf willows gliding, and by ferny brake.
Starts from a dizzy steep the undaunted
Rill
Robed instantly in garb of snow-white
foam;¹⁰
And laughing dares the Adventurer, who
hath clomb
So high, a rival purpose to fulfil;
Else let the dastard backward wend, and
roam,
Seeking less bold achievement, where he
will!

V

SOLE listener, Duddon! to the breeze that
played
With thy clear voice, I caught the fitful
sound
Wafted o'er sullen moss and craggy
mound—
Unfruitful solitudes, that seemed to up-
braid
The sun in heaven!—but now, to form a
shade⁵
For Thee, green alders have together
wound
Their foliage; ashes flung their arms
around;
And birch-trees risen in silver colonnade.
And thou hast also tempted here to rise,
'Mid sheltering pines, this Cottage rude
and grey;¹⁰
Whose ruddy children, by the mother's
eyes
Carelessly watched, sport through the
summer day,
Thy pleased associates:—light as endless
May
On infant bosoms lonely Nature lies.

VI

FLOWERS

ERE yet our course was graced with social
trees
It lacked not old remains of hawthorn
bowers,
Where small birds warbled to their para-
mours;
And, earlier still, was heard the hum of
bees;
I saw them ply their harmless robberies,

THE RIVER DUDDON

And caught the fragrance which the
sundry flowers,⁶
Fed by the stream with soft perpetual
showers,
Plenteously yielded to the vagrant breeze.
There bloomed the strawberry of the
wilderness;
The trembling eyebright showed her
sapphire blue,¹⁰
The thyme her purple, like the blush of
Even;
And if the breath of some to no caress
Invited, forth they peeped so fair to view,
All kinds alike seemed favourites of
Heaven.

VII

'CHANGE me, some God, into that breath-
ing rose!'
The love-sick Stripling fancifully sighs,
The envied flower beholding, as it lies
On Laura's breast, in exquisite repose;
Or he would pass into her bird, that
throws⁵
The darts of song from out its wiry cage;
Enraptured,—could he for himself en-
gage
The thousandth part of what the Nymph
bestows;
And what the little careless innocent
Ungraciously receives. Too daring choice!
There are whose calmer mind it would
content¹¹
To be an uncultured floweret of the glen,
Fearless of plough and scythe; or dark-
ling wren
That tunes on Duddon's banks her slender
voice.

VIII

WHAT aspect bore the Man who roved or
fled,
First of his tribe, to this dark dell—who
first
In this pellucid Current slaked his thirst?
What hopes came with him? what designs
were spread
Along his path? His unprotected bed⁵
What dreams encompassed? Was the
intruder nursed
In hideous usages, and rites accursed,
That thinned the living and disturbed the
dead?
No voice replies;—both air and earth are
mute;
And Thou, blue Streamlet, murmuring
yield'st no more¹⁰
Than a soft record, that, whatever fruit
Of ignorance thou might'st witness hereto-
fore,
Thy function was to heal and to restore,
To soothe and cleanse, not madden and
pollute!

IX

THE STEPPING-STONES

The struggling Rill insensibly is grown
Into a Brook of loud and stately march,
Crossed ever and anon by plank or arch;
And, for like use, lo! what might seem
a zone
Chosen for ornament—stone matched
with stone⁵
In studied symmetry, with interspace
For the clear waters to pursue their race
Without restraint. How swiftly have
they flown,
Succeeding—still succeeding! Here the
Child
Puts, when the high-swoln Flood runs
fierce and wild,¹⁰
His budding courage to the proof; and
here
Declining Manhood learns to note the sly
And sure encroachments of infirmity,
Thinking how fast time runs, life's end
how near!

X

THE SAME SUBJECT

NOT so that Pair whose youthful spirits
dance
With prompt emotion, urging them to
pass;
A sweet confusion checks the Shepherd-
lass;
Blushing she eyes the dizzy flood askance;
To stop ashamed—too timid to advance;
She ventures once again—another pause!
His outstretched hand He tauntingly
withdraws—⁷
She sues for help with piteous utterance!
Chidden she chides again; the thrilling
touch
Both feel, when he renews the wished-for
aid:¹⁰
Ah! if their fluttering hearts should stir
too much,
Should beat too strongly, both may be
betrayed.
The frolic Loves, who, from yon high
rock, see
The struggle, clap their wings for vic-
tory!

XI

THE FAERY CHASM

No fiction was it of the antique age:
A sky-blue stone, within this sunless cleft,
Is of the very footmarks unbereft
Which tiny Elves impressed;—on that
smooth stage
Dancing with all their brilliant equipage
In secret revels—haply after theft⁶
Of some sweet Babe—Flower stolen, and
coarse Weed left
For the distracted Mother to assuage

THE RIVER DUDDON

Her grief with, as she might!—But, where,
oh! where
Is traceable a vestige of the notes 10
That ruled those dances wild in character?—
Deep underground? Or in the upper air,
On the shrill wind of midnight? or where
floats
O'er twilight fields the autumnal gossamer?

XII

HINTS FOR THE FANCY

ON, loitering Muse—the swift Stream
chides us—on!
Albeit his deep-worn channel doth im-
mure
Objects immense portrayed in miniature,
Wild shapes for many a strange compari-
son!
Niagaras, Alpine passes, and anon 5
Abodes of Naiads, calm abysses pure,
Bright liquid mansions, fashioned to en-
dure
When the broad oak drops, a leafless
skeleton,
And the solidities of mortal pride,
Palace and tower, are crumbled into
dust!— 10
The Bard who walks with Duddon for his
guide,
Shall find such toys of fancy thickly set:
Turn from the sight, enamoured Muse—
we must;
And, if thou canst, leave them without
regret!

XIII

OPEN PROSPECT

HAIL to the fields—with Dwellings
sprinkled o'er,
And one small hamlet, under a green hill
Clustering, with barn and byre, and
spouting mill!
A glance suffices;—should we wish for
more,
Gay June would scorn us. But when
bleak winds roar 5
Through the stiff lance-like shoots of
pollard ash,
Dread swell of sound! loud as the gusts
that lash
The matted forests of Ontario's shore
By wasteful steel unsmitten—then would I
Turn into port; and, reckless of the
gale, 10
Reckless of angry Duddon sweeping by,
While the warm hearth exalts the mantling
ale,
Laugh with the generous household
heartily
At all the merry pranks of Donnerdale!

XIV

[Comp. before April, 1807 (1806?).—Pub. 1807.]
O MOUNTAIN Stream! the Shepherd and
his Cot
Are privileged inmates of deep solitude;
Nor would the nicest Anchorite exclude
A field or two of brighter green, or plot
Of tillage-ground, that seemeth like a
spot 5
Of stationary sunshine:—thou hast viewed
These only, Duddon! with their paths
renewed
By fits and starts, yet this contents thee
not.
Thee hath some awful Spirit impelled to
leave,
Utterly to desert, the haunts of men, 10
Though simple thy companions were and
few;
And through this wilderness a passage
cleave
Attended but by thy own voice, save when
The clouds and fowls of the air thy way
pursue!

XV

FROM this deep chasm, where quivering
sunbeams play
Upon its loftiest crags, mine eyes behold
A gloomy NICHE, capacious, blank, and
cold;
A concave free from shrubs and mosses
grey;
In semblance fresh, as if, with dire
affray,
Some Statue, placed amid these regions old 5
For tutelary service, thence had rolled,
Startling the flight of timid Yesterday!
Was it by mortals sculptured?—weary
slaves
Of slow endeavour! or abruptly cast 10
Into rude shape by fire, with roaring blast
Tempestuously let loose from central
caves?
Or fashioned by the turbulence of waves,
Then, when o'er highest hills the Deluge
passed?

XVI

AMERICAN TRADITION

SUCH fruitless questions may not long
beguile
Or plague the fancy 'mid the sculptured
shows
Conspicuous yet where Oroonoko flows;
There would the Indian answer with a
smile
Aimed at the White Man's ignorance the
while, 5
Of the GREAT WATERS telling how they
rose,
Covered the plains, and, wandering where
they chose,

¹ See Editor's note, p. 296.

THE RIVER DUDDON

Mounted through every intricate defile,
Triumphant.—Inundation wide and deep,
O'er which his Fathers urged, to ridge¹⁰
Else unapproachable, their buoyant way;
And carved, on mural cliff's undreaded
side,
Sun, moon, and stars, and beast of chase
or prey;
Whate'er they sought, shunned, loved, or
deified!¹

XVII

RETURN

A DARK plume fetch me from yon blasted
yew,
Perched on whose top the Danish Raven
croaks;
Aloft, the imperial Bird of Rome invokes
Departed ages, shedding where he flew
Loose fragments of wild wailing, that
bestrew⁵
The clouds and thrill the chambers of the
rocks;
And into silence hush the timorous flocks,
That, calmly couching while the nightly dew
Moistened each fleece, beneath the twink-
ling stars
Slept amid that lone Camp on Hardknot's¹⁰
height,²
Whose Guardians bent the knee to Jove
and Mars:
Or near that mystic Round of Druid frame
Tardily sinking by its proper weight
Deep into patient Earth, from whose
smooth breast it came!

XVIII

SEATHWAITE CHAPEL

SACRED Religion! 'mother of form and
fear,'
Dread arbitress of mutable respect,
New rites ordaining when the old are
wrecked,
Or cease to please the fickle worshipper;
Mother of Love! (that name best suits
thee here)⁵
Mother of Love! for this deep vale,
protect
Truth's holy lamp, pure source of bright
effect,
Gifted to purge the vapoury atmosphere
That seeks to stifle it;—as in those days
When this low Pile³ a Gospel Teacher
knew,¹⁰
Whose good works formed an endless
retinue:
A Pastor such as Chaucer's verse portrays;
Such as the heaven-taught skill of Herbert
drew;
And tender Goldsmith crowned with
deathless praise!

¹ See Humboldt's Personal Narrative.

² See Note, p. 710. ³ See Note, p. 711.

XIX

TRIBUTARY STREAM

My frame hath often trembled with de-
light
When hope presented some far-distant
good,
That seemed from heaven descending,
like the flood
Of yon pure waters, from their aery
height⁴
Hurrying, with lordly Duddon to unite;
Who, 'mid a world of images imprest
On the calm depth of his transparent
breast,
Appears to cherish most that Torrent
white,⁸
The fairest, softest, liveliest of them all!
And seldom hath ear listened to a tune
More lulling than the busy hum of Noon,
Swoln by that voice—whose murmur
musical
Announces to the thirsty fields a boon
Dewy and fresh, till showers again shall
fall.

XX

THE PLAIN OF DONNERDALE

The old inventive Poets, had they seen,
Or rather felt, the entrancement that
detains
Thy waters, Duddon! 'mid these flowery
plains;
The still repose, the liquid lapse serene,
Transferred to bowers imperishably
green,⁵
Had beautified Elysium! But these
chains
Will soon be broken;—a rough course
remains,
Rough as the past; where Thou, of placid
mien,
Innocuous as a firstling of the flock,
And countenanced like a soft cerulean
sky,¹⁰
Shalt change thy temper; and, with many
a shock
Given and received in mutual jeopardy,
Dance, like a Bacchanal, from rock to rock,
Tossing her frantic thyrsus wide and
high!

XXI

WHENCE that low voice?—A whisper
from the heart,
That told of days long past, when here
I roved
With friends and kindred tenderly be-
loved;
Some who had early mandates to depart,
Yet are allowed to steal my path athwart
By Duddon's side; once more do we
unite,⁶
Once more beneath the kind Earth's
tranquil light;

THE RIVER DUDDON

And smothered joys into new being start.
From her unworthy seat, the cloudy stall
Of Time, breaks forth triumphant Memory;
Her glistening tresses bound, yet light¹⁰
and free
As golden locks of birch, that rise and fall
On gales that breathe too gently to recall
Aught of the fading year's inclemency!

XXII

TRADITION

A LOVE-LORN Ma'id, at some far-distant
time,
Came to this hidden pool, whose depths
surpass
In crystal clearness Dian's looking-glass;
And, gazing, saw that Rose, which from
the prime
Derives its name, reflected as the chime⁵
Of echo doth reverberate some sweet
sound:
The starry treasure from the blue pro-
found
She longed to ravish;—shall she plunge,
or climb
The humid precipice, and seize the guest
Of April, smiling high in upper air?¹⁰
Desperate alternative! what fiend could
dare
To prompt the thought?—Upon the steep
rock's breast
The lonely Primrose yet renews its bloom,
Untouched memento of her hapless
doom!

XXIII

SHEEP-WASHING

SAD thoughts, avaunt!—partake we their
blithe cheer
Who gathered in betimes the unshorn
flock
To wash the fleece, where haply bands of
rock,
Checking the stream, make a pool smooth
and clear
As this we look on. Distant Mountains⁵
hear,
Hear and repeat, the turmoil that unites
Clamour of boys with innocent despites
Of barking dogs, and bleatings from
strange fear.
And what if Duddon's spotless flood
receive
Unwelcome mixtures as the uncouth
noise¹⁰
Thickens, the pastoral River will forgive
Such wrong; nor need we blame the
licensed joys,
Though false to Nature's quiet equipoise:
Frank are the sports, the stains are
fugitive.

XXIV

THE RESTING-PLACE

MID-NOON is past;—upon the sultry mead
No zephyr breathes, no cloud its shadow
throws:
If we advance unstrengthened by repose,
Farewell the solace of the vagrant reed!
This Nook—with woodbine hung and
straggling weed,⁵
Tempting recess as ever pilgrim chose,
Half grot, half harbour—proffers to enclose
Body and mind, from molestation freed,
In narrow compass—narrow as itself:
Or if the Fancy, too industrious Elf,¹⁰
Be loth that we should breathe awhile
exempt
From new incitements friendly to our
task,
Here wants not stealthy prospect, that
may tempt
Loose Idless to forego her wily mask.

XXV

METHINKS 'twere no unprecedented feat
Should some benignant Minister of air
Lift, and encircle with a cloudy chair,
The One for whom my heart shall ever
beat
With tenderest love;—or, if a safer seat
Atween his downy wings be furnished,⁶
there
Would lodge her, and the cherished bur-
den bear
O'er hill and valley to this dim retreat!
Rough ways my steps have trod;—too
rough and long
For her companionship; here dwells soft
ease:¹⁰
With sweets that she partakes not some
distaste
Mingles, and lurking consciousness of
wrong;
Languish the flowers; the waters seem to
waste
Their vocal charm; their sparklings cease
to please.

XXVI

RETURN, Content! for fondly I pursued,
Even when a child, the Streams—unheard,
unseen;
Through tangled woods, impending rocks
between;
Or, free as air, with flying inquest viewed
The sullen reservoirs whence their bold
brood—⁵
Pure as the morning, fretful, boisterous,
keen,
Green as the salt-sea billows, white and
green—
Poured down the hills, a choral multi-
tude!

THE RIVER DUDDON

Nor have I tracked their course for scanty
gains;
They taught me random cares and truant
joys,¹⁰
That shield from mischief and preserve
from stains
Vague minds, while men are growing out
of boys;
Maturer Fancy owes to their rough noise
Impetuous thoughts that brook not servile
reins.

XXVII

[Composed probably between 1815 and 1819.—
Published 1819.]

FALLEN, and diffused into a shapeless heap,
Or quietly self-buried in earth's mould,
Is that embattled House, whose massy
Keep
Flung from yon cliff a shadow large and
cold.
There dwelt the gay, the bountiful, the
bold;⁵
Till nightly lamentations, like the sweep
Of winds—though winds were silent—
struck a deep
And lasting terror through that ancient
Hold.
Its line of Warriors fled;—they shrunk
when tried
By ghostly power:—but Time's unsparing
hand¹⁰
Hath plucked such foes, like weeds, from
out the land;
And now, if men with men in peace abide,
All other strength the weakest may with-
stand,
All worse assaults may safely be defied.

XXVIII

JOURNEY RENEWED

I ROSE while yet the cattle, heat-oppress,
Crowded together under rustling trees
Brushed by the current of the water-
breeze;
And for their sakes, and love of all that
rest,
On Duddon's margin, in the sheltering
nest;⁵
For all the startled scaly tribes that slink
Into his coverts, and each fearless link
Of dancing insects forged upon his breast;
For these, and hopes and recollections
worn
Close to the vital seat of human clay;¹⁰
Glad meetings, tender partings, that up-
stay
The drooping mind of absence, by vows
sworn
In his pure presence near the trysting
thorn—
I thanked the Leader of my onward way.

¹ See Editor's note, p. 296.

XXIX

No record tells of lance opposed to lance,
Horse charging horse, 'mid these retired
domains;
Tells that their turf drank purple from
the veins
Of heroes, fallen, or struggling to advance,
Till doubtful combat issued in a trance
Of victory, that struck through heart and
reins⁶
Even to the inmost seat of mortal pains,
And lightened o'er the pallid countenance.
Yet, to the loyal and the brave, who lie
In the blank earth, neglected and forlorn,
The passing Winds memorial tribute pay;
The Torrents chant their praise, inspiring
scorn¹²
Of power usurped; with proclamation
high,
And glad acknowledgment, of lawful
sway.

XXX

Who swerves from innocence, who makes
divorce
Of that serene companion—a good name,
Recovers not his loss; but walks with
shame,
With doubt, with fear, and haply with
remorse:
And oft-times he—who, yielding to the
force⁵
Of chance-temptation, ere his journey end,
From chosen comrade turns, or faithful
friend—
In vain shall rue the broken intercourse.
Not so with such as loosely wear the chain
That binds them, pleasant River! to thy
side:—¹⁰
Through the rough copse wheel thou with
hasty stride;
I choose to saunter o'er the grassy plain,
Sure, when the separation has been tried,
That we, who part in love, shall meet
again.

XXXI

THE KIRK OF ULPHA to the pilgrim's eye
Is welcome as a star, that doth present
Its shining forehead through the peaceful
rent
Of a black cloud diffused o'er half the sky:
Or as a fruitful palm-tree towering high
O'er the parched waste beside an Arab's
tent;⁶
Or the Indian tree whose branches, down-
ward bent,
Take root again, a boundless canopy.
How sweet were leisure! could it yield no
more
Than 'mid that wave-washed Churchyard
to recline,¹⁰
From pastoral graves extracting thoughts
divine;

THE RIVER DUDDON

Or there to pace, and mark the summits
 Of distant moon-lit mountains faintly
 shine,
 Soothed by the unseen River's gentle roar.

XXXII

Nor hurled precipitous from steep to steep;
 Lingering no more 'mid flower-enamelled
 lands
 And blooming thickets; nor by rocky bands
 Held; but in radiant progress toward the
 Deep
 Where mightiest rivers into powerless
 sleep
 Sink, and forget their nature—*now* ex-
 pands
 Majestic Duddon, over smooth flat sands
 Gliding in silence with unfettered sweep!
 Beneath an ampler sky a region wide
 Is opened round him:—hamlets, towers,
 and towns,
 And blue-topped hills, behold him from
 afar;
 In stately mien to sovereign Thames allied
 Spreading his bosom under Kentish
 downs,
 With commerce freighted, or triumphant
 war.

XXXIII

CONCLUSION

BUT here no cannon thunders to the gale;
 Upon the wave no haughty pendants cast
 A crimson splendour: lowly is the mast
 That rises here, and humbly spread, the
 sail;
 While, less disturbed than in the narrow
 Vale

Through which with strange vicissitudes
 he passed,
 The Wanderer seeks that receptacle vast
 Where all his unambitious functions fail.
 And may thy Poet, cloud-born Stream!
 be free—
 The sweets of earth contentedly resigned,
 And each tumultuous working left be-
 hind
 At seemly distance—to advance like Thee;
 Prepared, in peace of heart, in calm of
 mind
 And soul, to mingle with Eternity!

XXXIV

AFTER-THOUGHT

*I THOUGHT of Thee, my partner and my
 guide,
 As being past away.—Vain sympathies!
 For, backward, Duddon! as I cast my
 eyes,
 I see what was, and is, and will abide;
 Still glides the Stream, and shall for ever
 glide;
 The Form remains, the Function never
 dies;
 While we, the brave, the mighty, and the
 wise,
 We Men, who in our morn of youth defied
 The elements, must vanish;—be it so!
 Enough, if something from our hands have
 power
 To live, and act, and serve the future hour;
 And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,
 Through love, through hope, and faith's
 transcendent dower,
 We feel that we are greater than we know.*

YARROW REVISITED

AND OTHER POEMS

COMPOSED (TWO EXCEPTED) DURING A TOUR IN SCOTLAND, AND ON THE
ENGLISH BORDER, IN THE AUTUMN OF 1831.¹

TO
SAMUEL ROGERS, ESQ.,

AS A TESTIMONY OF FRIENDSHIP
AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF INTELLECTUAL OBLIGATIONS
THESE MEMORIALS ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

RYDAL MOUNT, Dec. 11, 1834.

The following Stanzas are a memorial of a day
passed with Sir Walter Scott and other Friends
visiting the Banks of the Yarrow under his
guidance, immediately before his departure from
Abbotsford, for Naples.

The title 'Yarrow Revisited' will stand in no need
of explanation for Readers acquainted with the
Author's previous poems suggested by that
celebrated Stream.

I

THE gallant Youth, who may have gained,
Or seeks, a 'winsome Marrow,'
Was but an Infant in the lap
When first I looked on Yarrow;
Once more, by Newark's Castle-gate 5
Long left without a warder,
I stood, looked, listened, and with Thee,
Great Minstrel of the Border!

Grave thoughts ruled wide on that sweet
day,
Their dignity installing 10
In gentle bosoms, while sere leaves
Were on the bough, or falling;
But breezes played, and sunshine
gleamed—
The forest to embolden;
Reddened the fiery hues, and shot 15
Transparence through the golden.

For busy thoughts the Stream flowed on
In foamy agitation;
And slept in many a crystal pool
For quiet contemplation: 20
No public and no private care
The freeborn mind entralling,
We made a day of happy hours,
Our happy days recalling.

Brisk Youth appeared, the Morn of
Youth, 25
With freaks of graceful folly,—

Life's temperate Noon, her sober Eve,
Her Night not melancholy;
Past, present, future, all appeared
In harmony united, 30
Like guests that meet, and some from far,
By cordial love invited.

And if, as Yarrow, through the woods
And down the meadow ranging,
Did meet us with unaltered face, 35
Though we were changed and changing;
If, then, some natural shadows spread
Our inward prospect over,
The soul's deep valley was not slow
Its brightness to recover. 40

Eternal blessings on the Muse,
And her divine employment!
The blameless Muse, who trains her Sons
For hope and calm enjoyment;
Albeit sickness, lingering yet, 45
Has o'er their pillow brooded;
And Care waylays their steps—a Sprite
Not easily eluded.

For thee, O SCOTT! compelled to change
Green Eildon-hill and Cheviot 50
For warm Vesuvio's vine-clad slopes;
And leave thy Tweed and Tiviot
For mild Sorento's breezy waves;
May classic Fancy, linking
With native Fancy her fresh aid, 55
Preserve thy heart from sinking!

Oh! while they minister to thee,
Each vying with the other,
May Health return to mellow Age,
With Strength, her venturous brother;
And Tiber, and each brook and rill 61
Renowned in song and story,
With unimagined beauty shine,
Nor lose one ray of glory!

¹ The poems of this series, with two exceptions (conjectured by Prof. Knight to be Nos. xv and xvn), were written during the autumn of 1831, and first published in the vol. of 1835 entitled, *Yarrow Revisited, and Other Poems*. In order to avoid needless repetition, separate chronological notes will not be added to the individual poems of the series, save where the particulars of composition or publication differ in some respect from those now given.—Ed.

YARROW REVISITED, ETC.

For Thou, upon a hundred streams, 65
By tales of love and sorrow,
Of faithful love, undaunted truth,
Hast shed the power of Yarrow;
And streams unknown, hills yet unseen,
Wherever they invite Thee,
At parent Nature's grateful call,
With gladness must requite Thee.

A gracious welcome shall be thine,
Such looks of love and honour
As thy own Yarrow gave to me 75
When first I gazed upon her;
Beheld what I had feared to see,
Unwilling to surrender
Dreams treasured up from early days,
The holy and the tender. 80

And what, for this frail world, were all
That mortals do or suffer,
Did no responsive harp, no pen,
Memorial tribute offer?
Yea, what were mighty Nature's self? 85
Her features, could they win us,
Unhelped by the poetic voice
That hourly speaks within us?

Nor deem that localised Romance
Plays false with our affections;
Unsanctifies our tears—made sport 90
For fanciful dejections:
Ah, no! the visions of the past
Sustain the heart in feeling
Life as she is—our changeful Life,
With friends and kindred dealing. 95

Bear witness, Ye, whose thoughts that day
In Yarrow's groves were centred;
Who through the silent portal arch
Of mouldering Newark entered; 100
And clomb the winding stair that once
Too timidly was mounted
By the 'last Minstrel,' (not the last!)
Ere he his Tale recounted.

Flow on for ever, Yarrow Stream! 105
Fulfil thy pensive duty,
Well pleased that future Bards should chant
For simple hearts thy beauty;
To dream-light dear while yet unseen,
Dear to the common sunshine, 110
And dearer still, as now I feel,
To memory's shadowy moonshine!

II

ON THE DEPARTURE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT
FROM ABBOTSFORD, FOR NAPLES

[Composed September, 1831.—Published 1833
(*Literary Souvenir* of Alaric Watts); vol. of 1835.]

A TROUBLE, not of clouds, or weeping rain,
Nor of the setting sun's pathetic light
Engendered, hangs o'er Eildon's triple
height:
Spirits of Power, assembled there, complain
For kindred Power departing from their
sight;

While Tweed, best pleased in chanting a
blithe strain,
Saddens his voice again, and yet again.
Lift up your hearts, ye Mourners! for the
might 70
Of the whole world's good wishes with
him goes;
Blessings and prayers in nobler retinue
Than sceptred king or laurelled conqueror
knows, 11
Follow this wondrous Potentate. Be true,
Ye winds of ocean, and the midland sea,
Wafting your Charge to soft Parthenope!

III

A PLACE OF BURIAL IN THE SOUTH OF
SCOTLAND

PART fenced by man, part by a rugged steep
That curbs a foaming brook, a Grave-
yard lies;
The hare's best couching-place for fear-
less sleep;
Which moonlit elves, far seen by credulous
eyes, 4
Enter in dance. Of church, or sabbath ties,
No vestige now remains; yet thither creep
Bereft Ones, and in lowly anguish weep
Their prayers out to the wind and naked
skies.
Proud tomb is none; but rudely-sculp-
tured knights,
By humble choice of plain old times, are
seen 10
Level with earth, among the hillocks green:
Union not sad, when sunny daybreak
smites
The spangled turf, and neighbouring
thickets ring
With jubilate from the choirs of spring!

IV

ON THE SIGHT OF A MANSE IN THE SOUTH
OF SCOTLAND

SAY, ye far-travelled clouds, far-seeing
hills—
Among the happiest-looking homes of men
Scattered all Britain over, through deep glen,
On airy upland, and by forest rills,
And o'er wide plains cheered by the lark
that trills 5
His sky-born warblings—does aught meet
your ken
More fit to animate the Poet's pen,
Aught that more surely by its aspect fills
Pure minds with sinless envy, than the
Abode
Of the good Priest: who, faithful through
all hours 10
To his high charge, and truly serving God,
Has yet a heart and hand for trees and
flowers,
Enjoys the walks his predecessors trod,
Nor covets lineal rights in lands and towers.

YARROW REVISITED, ETC.

V

COMPOSED IN ROSLIN CHAPEL DURING
A STORM

THE wind is now thy organist;—a clank
(We know not whence) ministers for a
bell
To mark some change of service. As the
swell
Of music reached its height, and even
when sank
The notes, in prelude, ROSLIN! to a
blank
Of silence, how it thrilled thy sumptuous
roof,
Pillars, and arches,—not in vain time-
proof,
Though Christian rites be wanting! From
what bank
Came those live herbs? by what hand
were they sown
Where dew falls not, where rain-drops
seem unknown? 10
Yet in the Temple they a friendly niche
Share with their sculptured fellows, that,
green-grown,
Copy their beauty more and more, and
preach,
Though mute, of all things blending into
one.

VI

THE TROSACHS

THERE'S not a nook within this solemn
Pass
But were an apt confessional for One
Taught by his summer spent, his autumn
gone,
That Life is but a tale of morning grass
Withered at eve. From scenes of art
which chase 5
That thought away, turn, and with watch-
ful eyes
Feed it 'mid Nature's old felicities,
Rocks, rivers, and smooth lakes more
clear than glass
Untouched, unbreathed upon. Thrice
happy quest, 10
If from a golden perch of aspen spray
(October's workmanship to rival May)
The pensive warbler of the ruddy breast
That moral sweeten by a heaven-taught
lay,
Lulling the year, with all its cares, to rest!

VII

THE pibroch's note, discountenanced or
mute;
The Roman kilt, degraded to a toy
Of quaint apparel for a half-spoilt boy;
The target mouldering like ungathered
fruit;
The smoking steam-boat eager in pur-
suit,

As eagerly pursued; the umbrella spread
To weather-fend the Celtic herdsman's
head—
All speak of manners withering to the
root,
And of old honours, too, and passions
high:
Then may we ask, though pleased that
thought should range 10
Among the conquests of civility,
Survives imagination—to the change
Superior? Help to virtue does she give?
If not, O Mortals, better cease to live!

VIII

COMPOSED IN THE GLEN OF LOCH ETIVE
'THIS Land of Rainbows spanning glens
whose walls,
Rock-built, are hung with rainbow-
coloured mists—
Of far-stretched Meres whose salt flood
never rests—
Of tuneful Caves and playful Waterfalls—
Of Mountains varying momentarily their
crests— 5
Proud be this Land! whose poorest huts
are halls
Where Fancy entertains becoming guests;
While native song the heroic Past recalls.
Thus, in the net of her own wishes caught,
The Muse exclaimed; but Story now must
hide 10
Her trophies, Fancy crouch; the course
of pride
Has been diverted, other lessons taught,
That make the Patriot-spirit bow her head
Where the all-conquering Roman feared
to tread.

IX

EAGLES

[Composed at Dunollie Castle in the bay of Oban.]

DISHONOUR'D Rock and Ruin! that, by law
Tyrannic, keep the Bird of Jove em-
barred
Like a lone criminal whose life is spared.
Vexed is he, and screams loud. The last
I saw
Was on the wing; stooping, he struck
with awe 5
Man, bird, and beast; then, with a consort
paired,
From a bold headland, their loved airy's
guard,
Flew high above Atlantic waves, to draw
Light from the fountain of the setting sun.
Such was this Prisoner once; and when
his plumes 10
The sea-blast ruffles as the storm comes on,
Then, for a moment, he, in spirit, resumes
His rank 'mong freeborn creatures that
live free,
5 His power, his beauty, and his majesty.

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X

IN THE SOUND OF MULL

TRADITION, be thou mute! Oblivion,
throw
Thy veil in mercy o'er the records, hung
Round strath and mountain, stamped by
the ancient tongue
On rock and ruin darkening as we go,—
Spots where a word, ghost-like, survives
to show
What crimes from hate, or desperate love,
have sprung;
From honour misconceived, or fancied
wrong,
What feuds, not quenched but fed by
mutual woe.
Yet, though a wild vindictive Race,
untamed
By civil arts and labours of the pen, 10
Could gentleness be scorned by those
fierce Men,
Who, to spread wide the reverence they
claimed
For patriarchal occupations, named
Yon towering Peaks, 'Shepherds of Etive
Glen?'

XI

SUGGESTED AT TYNDRUM IN A STORM

ENOUGH of garlands, of the Arcadian
crook,
And all that Greece and Italy have sung
Of Swains reposing myrtle groves among!
Ours couch on naked rocks,—will cross a
brook
Swoln with chill rains, nor ever cast a
look
This way or that, or give it even a thought
More than by smoothest pathway may be
brought
Into a vacant mind. Can written book
Teach what *they* learn? Up, hardy Moun-
taineer!
And guide the Bard, ambitious to be One
Of Nature's privy council, as thou art, 11
On cloud-sequestered heights, that see
and hear
To what dread Powers He delegates his
part
On Earth, who works in the heaven of
heavens, alone.

XII

THE EARL OF BREADALBANE'S RUINED MAN-
SION, AND FAMILY BURIAL-PLACE, NEAR
KILLIN.

WELL sang the Bard who called the grave,
in strains
Thoughtful and sad, the 'narrow house.'
No style
Of fond sepulchral flattery can beguile

¹ In Gaelic, *Buachall Ette*.

Grief of her sting; nor cheat, where he
detains
The sleeping dust, stern Death. How
reconcile
With truth, or with each other, decked
remains
Of a once warm Abode, and that new Pile,
For the departed, built with curious pains
And mausolean pomp? Yet here they
stand
Together,—'mid trim walks and artful
bowers,
To be looked down upon by ancient hills,
That, for the living and the dead, demand
And prompt a Harmony of genuine
powers;
Concord that elevates the mind, and
stills.

XIII

'REST AND BE THANKFUL'

[At the Head of Glencroe.]

DOUBLING and doubling with laborious
walk,
Who, that has gained at length the
wished-for Height,
This brief this simple wayside Call can
slight,
And rests not thankful? Whether cheered
by talk
With some loved friend, or by the unseen
hawk
Whistling to clouds and sky-born streams,
that shine
At the sun's outbreak, as with light divine,
Ere they descend to nourish root and
stalk
Of valley flowers. Nor, while the limbs
repose,
Will we forget that, as the fowl can keep
Absolute stillness, poised aloft in air, 11
And fishes front, unmoved, the torrent's
sweep,—
So may the Soul, through powers that
Faith bestows,
Win rest, and ease, and peace, with bliss
that Angels share.

XIV

HIGHLAND HUT

SEE what gay wild flowers deck this earth-
built Cot,
Whose smoke, forth-issuing whence and
how it may,
Shines in the greeting of the sun's first ray
Like wreaths of vapour without stain or
blot.
The limpid mountain-rill avoids it not;
And why shouldst thou?—If rightly
trained and bred,
Humanity is humble, finds no spot

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Which her Heaven-guided feet refuse to tread.
The walls are cracked, sunk is the flowery roof,
Undressed the pathway leading to the door;
But love, as Nature loves, the lonely Poor;
Search, for their worth, some gentle heart wrong-proof,
Meek, patient, kind, and, were its trials fewer,
Belike less happy.—Stand no more aloof!¹

XV

THE HIGHLAND BROACH

The exact resemblance which the old Broach (still in use, though rarely met with, among the Highlanders) bears to the Roman Fibula must strike every one, and concurs with the plaid and kilt to recall to mind the communication which the ancient Romans had with this remote country.

If to Tradition faith be due,
And echoes from old verse speak true,
Ere the meek Saint, Columba, bore
Glad tidings to Iona's shore,
No common light of nature blessed
The mountain region of the west,
A land where gentle manners ruled
O'er men in dauntless virtues schooled,
That raised, for centuries, a bar
Impervious to the tide of war:
Yet peaceful Arts did entrance gain
Where haughty Force had striven in vain;
And, 'mid the works of skilful hands,
By wanderers brought from foreign lands
And various climes, was not unknown
The clasp that fixed the Roman Gown;
The Fibula, whose shape, I ween,
Still in the Highland Broach is seen,
The silver Broach of massy frame,
Worn at the breast of some grave Dame
On road or path, or at the door
Of fern-thatched hut on heathy moor:
But delicate of yore its mould,
And the material finest gold;
As might besem the fairest Fair,
Whether she graced a royal chair,
Or shed, within a vaulted hall,
No fancied lustre on the wall
Where shields of mighty heroes hung,
While Fingal heard what Ossian sung.

The heroic Age expired—it slept
Deep in its tomb:—the bramble crept
O'er Fingal's hearth; the grassy sod
Grew on the floors his sons had trod:
Malvina! where art thou? Their state
The noblest-born must abdicate;
The fairest, while with fire and sword
Come Spoilers—horde impelling horde,
Must walk the sorrowing mountains, drest
By ruder hands in homelier vest.

¹ See Note, p. 716.

Yet still the female bosom lent,
And loved to borrow, ornament;
Still was its inner world a place
Reached by the dews of heavenly grace;
Still pity to this last retreat
Clove fondly; to his favourite seat
Love wound his way by soft approach,
Beneath a massier Highland Broach.

When alternations came of rage
Yet fiercer, in a darker age;
And feuds, where, clan encountering clan,
The weaker perished to a man;
For maid and mother, when despair
Might else have triumphed, baffling
prayer,

One small possession lacked not power,
Provided in a calmer hour,
To meet such need as might befall—
Roof, raiment, bread, or burial:
For woman, even of tears bereft,
The hidden silver Broach was left.

As generations come and go,
Their arts, their customs, ebb and flow;
Fate, fortune, sweep strong powers away,
And feeble, of themselves, decay;
What poor abodes the heirloom hide,
In which the castle once took pride!
Tokens, once kept as boasted wealth,
If saved at all, are saved by stealth.
Lo! ships, from seas by nature barred,
Mount along ways by man prepared;
And in far-stretching vales, whose streams
Seek other seas, their canvas gleams.
Lo! busy towns spring up, on coasts
Thronged yesterday by airy ghosts;
Soon, like a lingering star forlorn
Among the novelties of morn,
While young delights on old encroach,
Will vanish the last Highland Broach.

But when, from out their viewless bed,
Like vapours, years have rolled and
spread;

And this poor verse, and worthier lays,
Shall yield no light of love or praise;
Then, by the spade, or cleaving plough,
Or torrent from the mountain's brow,
Or whirlwind, reckless what his might
Entombs, or forces into light;
Blind Chance, a volunteer ally,
That oft befriends Antiquity,
And clears Oblivion from reproach,
May render back the Highland Broach.¹

¹ How much the Broach is sometimes prized by persons in humble stations may be gathered from an occurrence mentioned to me by a female friend. She had had an opportunity of benefiting a poor old woman in her own hut, who, wishing to make a return, said to her daughter in Erse, in a tone of plaintive earnestness, 'I would give anything I have, but I hope she does not wish for my Broach!' and, uttering these words, she put her hand upon the Broach which fastened her kerchief, and which she imagined, had attracted the eye of her benefactress.

YARROW REVISITED, ETC.

XVI

THE BROWNIE

Upon a small island, not far from the head of Loch Lomond, are some remains of an ancient building, which was for several years the abode of a solitary Individual, one of the last survivors of the clan of Macfarlane, once powerful in that neighbourhood. Passing along the shore opposite this island in the year 1814, the Author learned these particulars, and that this person then living there had acquired the appellation of 'The Brownie.' See 'The Brownie's Cell,' to which the following is a sequel.

'How disappeared he?' Ask the newt and toad;

Ask of his fellow-men, and they will tell
How he was found, cold as an icicle,
Under an arch of that forlorn abode;
Where he, unproped, and by the gathering flood

Of years hemmed round, had dwelt, prepared to try

Privation's worst extremities, and die
With no one near save the omnipresent God.

Verily so to live was an awful choice—
A choice that wears the aspect of a doom;
But in the mould of mercy all is cast
For Souls familiar with the eternal Voice;
And this forgotten Taper to the last
Drove from itself, we trust, all frightful gloom.

XVII

TO THE PLANET VENUS, AN EVENING STAR
[Composed at Loch Lomond.]

THOUGH joy attend Thee orient at the birth

Of dawn, it cheers the lofty spirit most
To watch thy course when Daylight, fled from earth,

In the grey sky hath left his lingering Ghost,

Perplexed as if between a splendour lost
And splendour slowly mustering. Since the Sun,

The absolute, the world-absorbing One,
Relinquished half his empire to the host
Emboldened by thy guidance, holy Star,
Holy as princely, who that looks on thee
Touching, as now, in thy humility
The mountain-borders of this seat of care,
Can question that thy countenance is bright,

Celestial Power, as much with love as light?

XVIII

BOTHWELL CASTLE

[Passed unseen, on account of stormy weather.]

IMMURED in Bothwell's towers, at times the Brave

(So beautiful is Clyde) forgot to mourn
The liberty they lost at Bannockburn.

Once on those steeps I roamed at large,
and have

In mind the landscape, as if still in sight;
The river glides, the woods before me wave;

Then why repine that now in vain I crave
Needless renewal of an old delight?

Better to thank a dear and long-past day
For joy its sunny hours were free to give
Than blame the present, that our wish
hath crost.

Memory, like sleep, hath powers which
dreams obey,
Dreams, vivid dreams, that are not
fugitive;

How little that she cherishes is lost!

XIX

PICTURE OF DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN,
AT HAMILTON PALACE

AMID a fertile region green with wood
And fresh with rivers, well did it become
The ducal Owner, in his palace-home
To naturalise this tawny Lion brood;

Children of Art, that claim strange
brotherhood
(Couched in their den) with those that
room at large

Over the burning wilderness, and charge
The wind with terror while they roar for food.

Satiate are these; and stilled to eye and ear;

Hence, while we gaze, a more enduring
fear!

Yet is the Prophet calm, nor would the
cave

Daunt him—if his Companions, now
bedrowsed

Outstretched and listless, were by hunger
roused:

Man placed him here, and God, he knows,
can save.

XX

THE AVON

(A feeder of the Annan.)

AVON—a precious, an immortal name!

Yet is it one that other rivulets bear
Like this unheard-of, and their channels
wear

Like this contented, though unknown to
Fame:

For great and sacred is the modest claim
Of Streams to Nature's love, where'er
they flow;

And ne'er did Genius slight them, as they
go,

Tree, flower, and green herb, feeding
without blame.

But Praise can waste her voice on work
of tears,

YARROW REVISITED, ETC.

Anguish, and death: full oft where
 Innocent blood¹⁰
 Has mixed its current with the limpid
 flood,
 Her heaven-offending trophies Glory
 rears:
 Never for like distinction may the good
 Shrink from thy name, pure Rill, with
 unpleased ears.

XXI

SUGGESTED BY A VIEW FROM AN EMINENCE
 IN INGLEWOOD FOREST

THE forest huge of ancient Caledon
 Is but a name, no more is Inglewood,
 That swept from hill to hill, from flood to
 flood:
 On her last thorn the nightly moon has
 shone;
 Yet still, though inappropriate Wild be
 none,⁵
 Fair parks spread wide where Adam Bell
 might deign
 With Clym o' the Clough, were they alive
 again,
 To kill for merry feast their venison.
 Nor wants the holy Abbot's gliding Shade
 His church with monumental wreck be-
 strown;¹⁰
 The feudal Warrior-chief, a Ghost unlaid,
 Hath still his castle, though a skeleton,
 That he may watch by night, and lessons
 con
 Of power that perishes, and rights that
 fade.

XXII

HART'S-HORN TREE, NEAR PENRITH

HERE stood an Oak, that long had borne
 affixed
 To his huge trunk, or, with more subtle art,
 Among its withering topmost branches
 mixed,
 The palmy antlers of a hunted Hart,
 Whom the Dog Hercules pursued—his
 part⁵
 Each desperately sustaining, till at last
 Both sank and died, the life-veins of the
 chased
 And chaser bursting here with one dire
 smart.
 Mutual the victory, mutual the defeat!
 High was the trophy hung with pitiless
 pride;¹⁰
 Say, rather, with that generous sym-
 pathy
 That wants not, even in rudest breasts, a
 seat;
 And, for this feeling's sake, let no one
 chide
 Verse that would guard thy memory,
 HART'S-HORN TREE!¹

¹ See Note, p. 718.

XXIII

FANCY AND TRADITION

[Composed 1833.—Published 1835.]

THE Lovers took within this ancient grove
 Their last embrace; beside those crystal
 springs
 The Hermit saw the Angel spread his
 wings
 For instant flight; the Sage in yon alcove
 Sate musing; on that hill the Bard would
 rove,⁵
 Not mute, where now the linnet only
 sings:
 Thus everywhere to truth Tradition
 clings,
 Or Fancy localises Powers we love.
 Were only History licensed to take note
 Of things gone by, her meagre monu-
 ments¹⁰
 Would ill suffice for persons and events:
 There is an ampler page for man to quote,
 A readier book of manifold contents,
 Studied alike in palace and in cot.

XXIV

COUNTESS' PILLAR

On the roadside between Penrith and Appleby,
 there stands a pillar with the following inscrip-
 tion:—

'This pillar was erected, in the year 1656, by
 Anne Countess Dowager of Pembroke, &c. for
 a memorial of her last parting with her pious
 mother, Margaret Countess Dowager of Cum-
 berland, on the 2d of April, 1616; in memory
 whereof she hath left an annuity of £4 to be dis-
 tributed to the poor of the parish of Brougham,
 every 2d day of April for ever, upon the stone
 table placed hard by. Laus Deo!'

WHILE the Poor gather round, till the
 end of time
 May this bright flower of Charity display
 Its bloom, unfolding at the appointed
 day;
 Flower than the loveliest of the vernal
 prime
 Lovelier—transplanted from heaven's
 purest clime!⁵
 'Charity never faileth:' on that creed,
 More than on written testament or deed,
 The pious Lady built with hope sublime.
 Alms on this stone to be dealt out, *for*
 ever!
 'LAUS DEO.' Many a Stranger passing
 by¹⁰
 Has with that Parting mixed a filial sigh,
 Blest its humane Memorial's fond en-
 deavour;
 And, fastening on those lines an eye tear-
 glazed,
 Has ended, though no Clerk, with 'God
 be praised!'

YARROW REVISITED, ETC.

XXV

ROMAN ANTIQUITIES

(From the Roman Station at Old Penrith.)

How profitless the relics that we cull,
 Troubling the last holds of ambitious
 Rome,
 Unless they chasten fancies that presume
 Too high, or idle agitations lull!
 Of the world's flatteries if the brain be
 full,
 To have no seat for thought were better
 doom,
 Like this old helmet, or the eyeless skull
 Of him who gloried in its nodding plume.
 Heaven out of view, our wishes what are
 they?
 Our fond regrets tenacious in their grasp?
 The Sage's theory? the Poet's lay?—
 Mere Fibulæ without a robe to clasp;
 Obsolete lamps, whose light no time
 recalls;
 Urns without ashes, tearless lacrymals!

XXVI

APOLOGY

FOR THE FOREGOING POEMS

No more: the end is sudden and abrupt,
 Abrupt—as without preconceived design
 Was the beginning; yet the several Lays
 Have moved in order, to each other bound
 By a continuous and acknowledged tie
 Though unapparent—like those Shapes
 distinct
 That yet survive ensculptured on the walls
 Of palaces, or temples, 'mid the wreck
 Of famed Persepolis; each following each,
 As might be seem a stately embassy,
 In set array; these bearing in their hands

Ensign of civil power, weapon of war,
 Or gift to be presented at the throne
 Of the Great King; and others, as they go
 In priestly vest, with holy offerings
 charged,
 Or leading victims drest for sacrifice.
 Nor will the Power we serve, that sacred
 Power,
 The Spirit of humanity, disdain
 A ministration humble but sincere,
 That from a threshold loved by every
 Muse
 Its impulse took—that sorrow-stricken
 door,
 Whence, as a current from its fountain-
 head,
 Our thoughts have issued, and our feelings
 flowed,
 Receiving, willingly or not, fresh strength
 From kindred sources; while around us
 sighed
 (Life's three first seasons having passed
 away)
 Leaf-scattering winds; and hoar-frost
 sprinklings fell
 (Foretaste of winter) on the moorland
 heights;
 And every day brought with it tidings new
 Of rash change, ominous for the public
 weal.
 Hence, if dejection has too oft encroached
 Upon that sweet and tender melancholy
 Which may itself be cherished and
 caressed
 More than enough; a fault so natural
 (Even with the young, the hopeful, or the
 gay)
 For prompt forgiveness will not sue in
 vain.

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE

OR

THE FATE OF THE NORTONS

[Composed 1807-1808.—Published 1815 (4to); collective ed. 1820.]

ADVERTISEMENT

During the Summer of 1807 I visited, for the first time, the beautiful country that surrounds Bolton Priory in Yorkshire; and the Poem of 'The White Doe,' founded upon a Tradition connected with that place, was composed at the close of the same year.

DEDICATION

In trellised shed with clustering roses gay,
 And, MARY! oft beside our blazing fire,
 When years of wedded life were as a day
 Whose current answers to the heart's desire,
 Did we together read in Spenser's Lay
 How Una, sad of soul—in sad attire,
 The gentle Una, of celestial birth,
 To seek her Knight went wandering o'er the earth.

Ah, then, Belovéd! pleasing was the smart,
 And the tear precious in compassion shed
 For Her, who, pierced by sorrow's thrilling dart,
 Did meekly bear the pang unmerited;
 Meek as that emblem of her lowly heart
 The milk-white Lamb which in a line she led,—
 And faithful, loyal in her innocence,
 Like the brave Lion slain in her defence.

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE

Notes could we hear as of a fairy shell
Attuned to words with sacred wisdom fraught;
Free Fancy prized each specious miracle,
And all its finer inspiration caught; 20
Till in the bosom of our rustic Cell
We by a lamentable change were taught
That 'bliss with mortal Man may not abide.'
How nearly joy and sorrow are allied!

For us the stream of fiction ceased to flow, 25
For us the voice of melody was mute.
—But, as soft gales dissolve the dreary snow,
And give the timid herbage leave to shoot,
Heaven's breathing influence failed not to bestow
A timely promise of unlooked-for fruit, 30
Fair fruit of pleasure and serene content
From blossoms wild of fancies innocent.

It soothed us—it beguiled us—then, to hear
Once more of troubles wrought by magic spell;
And griefs whose airy motion comes not near 35
The pangs that tempt the Spirit to rebel:
Then, with mild Una in her sober cheer,
High over hill and low adown the dell
Again we wandered, willing to partake
All that she suffered for her dear Lord's sake. 40

Then, too, this Song of mine once more could
please,
Where anguish, strange as dreams of restless sleep,
Is tempered and allayed by sympathies
Aloft ascending, and descending deep,
Even to the inferior Kinds; whom forest-trees 45
Protect from beating sunbeams, and the sweep
Of the sharp winds;—fair Creatures!—to whom
Heaven
A calm and sinless life, with love, hath given.

This tragic Story cheered us; for it speaks
Of female patience winning firm repose; 50
And, of the recompense that conscience seeks,
A bright, encouraging, example shows;
Needful when o'er wide realms the tempest breaks,
Needful amid life's ordinary woes;—
Hence not for them unfitted who would bless 55
A happy hour with holier happiness.

He serves the Muses erringly and ill,
Whose aim is pleasure light and fugitive:
O, that my mind were equal to fulfil
The comprehensive mandate which they give—
Vain aspiration of an earnest will! 6x
Yet in this moral Strain a power may live.
Beloved Wife! such solace to impart
As it hath yielded to thy tender heart.

RYDAL MOUNT, WESTMORELAND,
April 20, 1815.

'Action is transitory—a step, a blow,
The motion of a muscle—this way or that—
'Tis done; and in the after-vacancy
We wonder at ourselves like men betrayed:
Suffering is permanent, obscure and dark,
And has the nature of infinity.¹
Yet through that darkness (infinite though it seem
And irremovable) gracious openings lie,
By which the soul—with patient steps of thought
Now toiling, wafted now on wings of prayer—
May pass in hope, and, though from mortal bonds
Yet undelivered, rise with sure ascent
Even to the fountain-head of peace divine.'

¹ These six lines ('Action is transitory . . . infinity') are quoted from the Tragedy of *The Borderers*, Act III, Scene v (ll. 1539–1544). The entire passage ('Action . . . divine') was added in 1837.—ED.

'They that deny a God destroy Man's nobility;
for certainly Man is of kin to the Beast by his
Body, and if he be not of kin to God by his Spirit,
he is a base ignoble Creature. It destroys likewise
Magnanimity, and the raising of humane Nature;
for take an example of a Dog, and mark what a
generosity and courage he will put on, when he
finds himself maintained by a Man, who to him
is instead of a God, or Melior Natura. Which
courage is manifestly such as that Creature without
that confidence of a better Nature than his
own could never attain. So Man, when he rest-
eth and assureth himself upon Divine protection
and favour, gathereth a force and faith which
human Nature in itself could not obtain.'

LORD BACON.

CANTO FIRST

FROM Bolton's old monastic tower
The bells ring loud with gladsome power;
The sun shines bright; the fields are gay
With people in their best array
Of stole and doublet, hood and scarf, 5
Along the banks of crystal Wharf,
Through the Vale retired and lowly,
Trooping to that summons holy.
And, up among the moorlands, see
What sprinklings of blithe company! 10
Of lasses and of shepherd grooms,
That down the steep hills force their way,
Like cattle through the budded brooms;
Path, or no path, what care they?
And thus in joyous mood they hie 15
To Bolton's mouldering Priory.

What would they there?—full fifty
years
That sumptuous Pile, with all its peers,
Too harshly hath been doomed to taste
The bitterness of wrong and waste: 20
Its courts are ravaged; but the tower
Is standing with a voice of power,
That ancient voice which wont to call
To mass or some high festival;
And in the shattered fabric's heart 25
Remaineth one protected part;
A Chapel, like a wild-bird's nest,
Closely embowered and trimly drest;
And thither young and old repair,
This Sabbath-day, for praise and prayer.

Fast the churchyard fills;—anon 31
Look again, and they all are gone;
The cluster round the porch, and the folk
Who sate in the shade of the Prior's Oak!
And scarcely have they disappeared 35
Ere the prelusive hymn is heard:—
With one consent the people rejoice,
Filling the church with a lofty voice!
They sing a service which they feel:
For 'tis the sunrise now of zeal; 40
Of a pure faith the vernal prime—
In great Eliza's golden time.

A moment ends the fervent din,
And all is hushed, without and within;
For though the priest, more tranquilly,
Recites the holy Liturgy, 46

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE

The only voice which you can hear
Is the river murmuring near.

—When soft!—the dusky trees between,
And down the path through the open
green, 50

Where is no living thing to be seen;
And through yon gateway, where is found,
Beneath the arch with ivy bound,
Free entrance to the churchyard ground—
Comes gliding in with lovely gleam, 55
Comes gliding in serene and slow,
Soft and silent as a dream,
A solitary Doe!

White she is as lily of June,
And beauteous as the silver moon 60
When out of sight the clouds are driven
And she is left alone in heaven;
Or like a ship some gentle day
In sunshine sailing far away,
A glittering ship, that hath the plain 65
Of ocean for her own domain.

Lie silent in your graves, ye dead!
Lie quiet in your churchyard bed!
Ye living, tend your holy cares;
Ye multitude, pursue your prayers; 70
And blame not me if my heart and sight
Are occupied with one delight!
'Tis a work for sabbath hours
If I with this bright Creature go:
Whether she be of forest bowers, 75
From the bowers of earth below;
Or a Spirit for one day given,
A pledge of grace from purest heaven.

What harmonious pensive changes
Wait upon her as she ranges
Round and through this Pile of state
Overthrown and desolate!
Now a step or two her way
Leads through space of open day,
Where the enamoured sunny light
Brightens her that was so bright;
Now doth a delicate shadow fall,
Falls upon her like a breath,
From some lofty arch or wall,
As she passes underneath:
Now some gloomy nook partakes
Of the glory that she makes,—
High-ribbed vault of stone, or cell,
With perfect cunning framed as well
Of stone, and ivy, and the spread
Of the elder's bushy head;
Some jealous and forbidding cell,
That doth the living stars repel,
And where no flower hath leave to dwell.

The presence of this wandering Doe
Fills many a damp obscure recess 101
With lustre of a saintly show;
And, reappearing, she no less
Sheds on the flowers that round her blow
A more than sunny liveliness. 105
But say, among these holy places,
Which thus assiduously she paces,

Comes she with a votary's task,
Rite to perform, or boon to ask?
Fair Pilgrim! harbours she a sense 110
Of sorrow, or of reverence?
Can she be grieved for quire or shrine,
Crushed as if by wrath divine?
For what survives of house where God
Was worshipped, or where Man abode;
For old magnificence undone; 116
Or for the gentler work begun
By Nature, softening and concealing,
And busy with a hand of healing?
Mourns she for lordly chamber's hearth
That to the sapling ash gives birth; 121
For dormitory's length laid bare
Where the wild rose blossoms fair;
Or altar, whence the cross was rent,
Now rich with mossy ornament? 125
—She sees a warrior carved in stone,
Among the thick weeds, stretched alone;
A warrior, with his shield of pride
Cleaving humbly to his side,
And hands in resignation prest, 130
Palm to palm, on his tranquil breast;
As little she regards the sight
As a common creature might:
If she be doomed to inward care,
Or service, it must lie elsewhere. 135
—But hers are eyes serenely bright,
And on she moves—with pace how light!
Nor spares to stoop her head, and taste
The dewy turf with flowers bestrown;
And thus she fares, until at last 140
Beside the ridge of a grassy grave
In quietness she lays her down;
Gentle as a weary wave
Sinks, when the summer breeze hath
died, 145
Against an anchored vessel's side;
Even so, without distress, doth she
Lie down in peace, and lovingly. 85

The day is placid in its going,
To a lingering motion bound,
Like the crystal stream now flowing 150
With its softest summer sound:
So the balmy minutes pass,
While this radiant Creature lies
Couched upon the dewy grass,
Pensively with downcast eyes. 155
—But now again the people raise
With awful cheer a voice of praise;
It is the last, the parting song;
And from the temple forth they throng,
And quickly spread themselves abroad,
While each pursues his several road. 161
But some—a variegated band
Of middle-aged, and old, and young,
And little children by the hand
Upon their leading mothers hung— 165
With mute obeisance gladly paid
Turn towards the spot where, full in view,
The white Doe, to her service true,
Her sabbath couch has made.

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE

It was a solitary mound; 170
Which two spears' length of level ground
Did from all other graves divide:
As if in some respect of pride;
Or melancholy's sickly mood,
Still shy of human neighbourhood; 175
Or guilt, that humbly would express
A penitential loneliness.

'Look, there she is, my Child! draw near;

She fears not, wherefore should we fear?
She means no harm;—but still the Boy,
To whom the words were softly said, 181
Hung back, and smiled, and blushed for joy,

A shame-faced blush of glowing red!
Again the Mother whispered low,
'Now you have seen the famous Doe; 185
From Rylstone she hath found her way
Over the hills this sabbath day;
Her work, whate'er it be, is done,
And she will depart when we are gone;
Thus doth she keep, from year to year,
Her sabbath morning, foul or fair.' 191

Bright was the Creature, as in dreams
The Boy had seen her, yea, more bright;
But is she truly what she seems?
He asks with insecure delight, 195
Asks of himself, and doubts,—and still
The doubt returns against his will:
Though he, and all the standers-by,
Could tell a tragic history
Of facts divulged, wherein appear 200
Substantial motive, reason clear,
Why thus the milk-white Doe is found
Couchant beside that lonely mound;
And why she duly loves to pace
The circuit of this hallowed place, 205
Nor to the Child's enquiring mind
Is such perplexity confined:
For, spite of sober Truth that sees
A world of fixed remembrances
Which to this mystery belong, 210
If, undeceived, my skill can trace
The characters of every face,
There lack not strange delusion here,
Conjecture vague, and idle fear,
And superstitious fancies strong, 215
Which do the gentle Creature wrong.

That bearded, staff-supported Sire—
Who in his boyhood often fed
Full cheerily on convent-bread
And heard old tales by the convent-fire,
And to his grave will go with scars, 221
Relics of long and distant wars—
That Old Man, studious to expound
The spectacle, is mounting high
To days of dim antiquity;
When Lady Aaliza mourned 225
Her Son, and felt in her despair
The pang of unavailing prayer;

Her Son in Wharf's abysses drowned,
The noble Boy of Egremound. 230
From which affliction—when the grace
Of God had in her heart found place—
A pious structure, fair to see,
Rose up, this stately Priory!
The Lady's work;—but now laid low;
To the grief of her soul that doth come
and go, 236
In the beautiful form of this innocent
Doe:
Which, though seemingly doomed in its
breast to sustain
A softened remembrance of sorrow and
pain,
Is spotless, and holy, and gentle, and
bright; 240
And glides o'er the earth like an angel of
light.

Pass, pass who will, yon chantry
door;
And through the chink in the fractured
floor

Look down, and see a griesly sight;
A vault where the bodies are buried
upright! 245

There, face by face, and hand by hand,
The Claphams and Mauleverers stand;
And, in his place, among son and sire,
Is John de Clapham, that fierce Esquire,
A valiant man, and a name of dread
In the ruthless wars of the White and
Red; 251

Who dragged Earl Pembroke from
Banbury church
And smote off his head on the stones of
the porch!

Look down among them, if you dare;
Oft does the White Doe loiter there, 255
Prying into the darksome rent;
Nor can it be with good intent:
So thinks that Dame of haughty air,
Who hath a Page her book to hold,
And wears a frontlet edged with gold.
Harsh thoughts with her high mood
agree— 261

Who counts among her ancestry
Earl Pembroke, slain so impiously!

That slender Youth, a scholar pale,
From Oxford come to his native vale,
He also hath his own conceit: 266
It is, thinks he, the gracious Fairy,
Who loved the Shepherd-lord to meet
In his wanderings solitary:
Wild notes she in his hearing sang, 270
A song of Nature's hidden powers;
That whistled like the wind, and rang
Among the rocks and holly bowers.
'Twas said that She all shapes could wear;
And oftentimes before him stood, 275
Amid the trees of some thick wood,
In semblance of a lady fair;

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE

CANTO SECOND

And taught him signs, and showed him
sights,

In Craven's dens, on Cumbrian heights;
When under cloud of fear he lay, 280
A shepherd clad in homely grey;
Nor left him at his later day.

And hence when he, with spear and
shield,

Rode full of years to Flodden-field,
His eye could see the hidden spring, 285
And how the current was to flow;
The fatal end of Scotland's King,
And all that hopeless overthrow.

But not in wars did he delight,
This Clifford wished for worthier might;
Nor in broad pomp, or courtly state; 291
Him his own thoughts did elevate,—
Most happy in the shy recess
Of Barden's lowly quietness.

And choice of studious friends had he
Of Bolton's dear fraternity; 296
Who, standing on this old church tower,
In many a calm propitious hour,
Perused, with him, the starry sky;

Or, in their cells, with him did pry 300
For other lore,—by keen desire
Urged to close toil with chemic fire;
In quest belike of transmutations

Rich as the mine's most bright creations.
But they and their good works are fled,
And all is now disquieted— 306
And peace is none, for living or dead!

Ah, pensive Scholar, think not so,
But look again at the radiant Doe!
What quiet watch she seems to keep, 310
Alone, beside that grassy heap!
Why mention other thoughts unmeet
For vision so composed and sweet?
While stand the people in a ring,
Gazing, doubting, questioning; 315
Yea, many overcome in spite
Of recollections clear and bright;
Which yet do unto some impart
An undisturbed repose of heart.
And all the assembly own a law 320
Of orderly respect and awe;
But see—they vanish one by one,
And last, the Doe herself is gone.

Harp! we have been full long beguiled
By vague thoughts, lured by fancies
wild; 325

To which, with no reluctant strings,
Thou hast attuned thy murmurings;
And now before this Pile we stand
In solitude, and utter peace:

But, Harp! thy murmurs may not cease—
A Spirit, with his angelic wings, 331

In soft and breeze-like visitings,
Has touched thee—and a Spirit's hand:
A voice is with us—a command
To chant, in strains of heavenly glory,
A tale of tears, a mortal story! 336

THE Harp in lowliness obeyed;
And first we sang of the greenwood shade
And a solitary Maid;

Beginning, where the song must end, 340
With her, and with her sylvan Friend;
The Friend, who stood before her sight,
Her only unextinguished light;
Her last companion in a dearth
Of love, upon a hopeless earth. 345

For She it was—this Maid, who
wrought

Meekly, with foreboding thought,
In vermeil colours and in gold
An unblest work; which, standing by,
Her Father did with joy behold,— 350
Exulting in its imagery;

A Banner, fashioned to fulfil
Too perfectly his headstrong will:
For on this Banner had her hand 354
Embroidered (such her Sire's command)
The sacred Cross; and figured there
The five dear wounds our Lord did bear;
Full soon to be uplifted high,
And float in rueful company!

It was the time when England's Queen
Twelve years had reigned, a Sovereign
dread; 361

Nor yet the restless crown had been
Disturbed upon her virgin head;
But now the inly-working North
Was ripe to send its thousands forth, 365
A potent vassalage, to fight

In Percy's and in Neville's right,
Two Earls fast leagued in discontent,
Who gave their wishes open vent;
And boldly urged a general plea, 370
The rites of ancient piety

To be triumphantly restored,
By the stern justice of the sword!
And that same Banner, on whose breast
The blameless Lady had express 375
Memorials chosen to give life

And sunshine to a dangerous strife;
That Banner, waiting for the Call,
Stood quietly in Rylstone-hall.

It came; and Francis Norton said, 380
'O Father! rise not in this fray—

The hairs are white upon your head;
Dear Father, hear me when I say

It is for you too late a day!
Bethink you of your own good name:
A just and gracious Queen have we, 386
A pure religion, and the claim
Of peace on our humanity.—

'Tis meet that I endure your scorn;
I am your son, your eldest born; 390

But not for lordship or for land,
My Father, do I clasp your knees;
The Banner touch not, stay your hand,
This multitude of men disband,

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE

And live at home in blameless ease; 395
For these my brethren's sake, for me;
And, most of all, for Emily!

Tumultuous noises filled the hall;
And scarcely could the Father hear
That name—pronounced with a dying
fall— 400

The name of his only Daughter dear,
As on the banner which stood near
He glanced a look of holy pride,
And his moist eyes were glorified;
Then did he seize the staff, and say: 405
'Thou, Richard, bear'st thy father's name,
Keep thou this ensign till the day
When I of thee require the same:
Thy place be on my better hand;—
And seven as true as thou, I see, 410
Will cleave to this good cause and me.'
He spake, and eight brave sons straight-
way
All followed him, a gallant band!

Thus, with his sons, when forth he came
The sight was hailed with loud acclaim
And din of arms and minstrelsy, 416
From all his warlike tenantry,
All horsed and harnessed with him to
ride,—
A voice to which the hills replied!

But Francis, in the vacant hall, 420
Stood silent under dreary weight,—
A phantasm, in which roof and wall
Shook, tottered, swam before his sight;
A phantasm like a dream of night!
Thus overwhelmed, and desolate, 425
He found his way to a postern-gate;
And, when he waked, his languid eye
Was on the calm and silent sky;
With air about him breathing sweet, 429
And earth's green grass beneath his feet;
Nor did he fail ere long to hear
A sound of military cheer,
Faint—but it reached that sheltered spot;
He heard, and it disturbed him not.

There stood he, leaning on a lance 435
Which he had grasped unknowingly,
Had blindly grasped in that strong trance,
That dimness of heart-agony;
There stood he, cleansed from the despair
And sorrow of his fruitless prayer. 440
The past he calmly hath reviewed:
But where will be the fortitude
Of this brave man, when he shall see
That Form beneath the spreading tree,
And know that it is Emily? 445

He saw her where in open view
She sate beneath the spreading yew—
Her head upon her lap, concealing
In solitude her bitter feeling:
'Might ever son command a sire, 450
The act were justified to-day.'

This to himself—and to the Maid,
Whom now he had approached, he said—
'Gone are they,—they have their desire;
And I with thee one hour will stay, 455
To give thee comfort if I may.'

She heard, but looked not up, nor
spake;
And sorrow moved him to partake
Her silence; then his thoughts turned
round,
And fervent words a passage found. 460

'Gone are they, bravely, though misled;
With a dear Father at their head!
The Sons obey a natural lord;
The Father had given solemn word
To noble Percy; and a force 465
Still stronger, bends him to his course.
This said, our tears to-day may fall
As at an innocent funeral.
In deep and awful channel runs
This sympathy of Sire and Sons; 470
Untried our Brothers have been loved
With heart by simple nature moved;
And now their faithfulness is proved:
For faithful we must call them, bearing
That soul of conscientious daring. 475
—There were they all in circle—there
Stood Richard, Ambrose, Christopher,
John with a sword that will not fail,
And Marmaduke in fearless mail,
And those bright Twins were side by side;
And there, by fresh hopes beautified, 481
Stood He, whose arm yet lacks the power
Of man, our youngest, fairest flower!
I, by the right of eldest born,
And in a second father's place, 485
Presumed to grapple with their scorn,
And meet their pity face to face;
Yea, trusting in God's holy aid,
I to my Father knelt and prayed;
And one, the pensive Marmaduke, 490
Methought, was yielding inwardly,
And would have laid his purpose by,
But for a glance of his Father's eye,
Which I myself could scarcely brook.

'Then be we, each and all, forgiven! 495
Thou, chiefly thou, my Sister dear,
Whose pangs are registered in heaven—
The stifled sigh, the hidden tear,
And smiles, that dared to take their place,
Meek filial smiles, upon thy face, 500
As that unhallowed Banner grew
Beneath a loving old Man's view.
Thy part is done—thy painful part;
Be thou then satisfied in heart!
A further, though far easier, task 505
Than thine hath been, my duties ask;
With theirs my efforts cannot blend,
I cannot for such cause contend;
Their aims I utterly forswear;
But I in body will be there. 510

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE

Unarmed and naked will I go,
Be at their side, come weal or woe:
On kind occasions I may wait,
See, hear, obstruct, or mitigate.
Bare breast I take and an empty hand'.¹—
Therewith he threw away the lance,
Which he had grasped in that strong
trance;
Spurned it, like something that would
stand
Between him and the pure intent
Of love on which his soul was bent. 520

'For thee, for thee, is left the sense
Of trial past without offence
To God or man; such innocence,
Such consolation, and the excess
Of an unmerited distress; 525
In that thy very strength must lie.
—O Sister, I could prophesy!
The time is come that rings the knell
Of all we loved, and loved so well:
Hope nothing, if I thus may speak 530
To thee, a woman, and thence weak:
Hope nothing, I repeat; for we
Are doomed to perish utterly:
'Tis meet that thou with me divide
The thought while I am by thy side, 535
Acknowledging a grace in this,
A comfort in the dark abyss.
But look not for me when I am gone,
And be no farther wrought upon:
Farewell all wishes, all debate, 540
All prayers for this cause, or for that!
Weep, if that aid thee; but depend
Upon no help of outward friend;
Espouse thy doom at once, and cleave
To fortitude without reprieve. 545
For we must fall, both we and ours—
This Mansion and these pleasant bowers,
Walks, pools, and arbours, homestead,
hall—

Our fate is theirs, will reach them all;
The young horse must forsake his manger,
And learn to glory in a Stranger; 551
The hawk forget his perch; the hound
Be parted from his ancient ground:
The blast will sweep us all away—
One desolation, one decay! 555
And even this Creature!' which words
saying,
He pointed to a lovely Doe,
A few steps distant, feeding, straying;
Fair creature, and more white than
snow!
'Even she will to her peaceful woods 560
Return, and to her murmuring floods,
And be in heart and soul the same
She was before she hither came;
Ere she had learned to love us all,
Herself beloved in Rylstone-hall. 565
—But thou, my Sister, doomed to be
The last leaf on a blasted tree;

¹ See the Old Ballad,—'The Rising of the North.

If not in vain we breathed the breath
Together of a purer faith;
If hand in hand we have been led, 570
And thou, (O happy thought this day!)
Not seldom foremost in the way;
If on one thought our minds have fed,
And we have in one meaning read;
If, when at home our private weal 575
Hath suffered from the shock of zeal,
Together we have learned to prize
Forbearance and self-sacrifice;
If we like combatants have fared,
And for this issue been prepared; 580
If thou art beautiful, and youth
And thought endue thee with all truth—
Be strong;—be worthy of the grace
Of God, and fill thy destined place:
A Soul, by force of sorrows high, 585
Uplifted to the purest sky
Of undisturbed humanity!'

He ended,—or she heard no more;
He led her from the yew-tree shade,
And at the mansion's silent door, 590
He kissed the consecrated Maid;
And down the valley then pursued,
Alone, the armed Multitude.

CANTO THIRD

Now joy for you who from the towers
Of Brancepeth look in doubt and fear,
Telling melancholy hours! 596
Proclaim it, let your Masters hear
That Norton with his band is near!
The watchmen from their station high
Pronounced the word,—and the Earls
descry, 600
Well-pleased, the armed Company
Marching down the banks of Were.

Said fearless Norton to the pair
Gone forth to greet him on the plain—
'This meeting, noble Lords! looks fair,
I bring with me a goodly train; 606
Their hearts are with you: hill and dale
Have helped us: Ure we crossed, and
Swale,
And horse and harness followed—see
The best part of their Yeomanry! 610
—Stand forth, my Sons!—these eight are
mine,
Whom to this service I commend;
Which way so'er our fate incline,
These will be faithful to the end; 614
They are my all!—voice failed him here—
'My all save one, a Daughter dear!
Whom I have left, Love's mildest birth,
The meekest Child on this blessed earth.
I had—but these are by my side,
These Eight, and this is a day of pride!
The time is ripe. With festive din 621
Lo! how the people are flocking in,—
Like hungry fowl to the feeder's hand
When snow lies heavy upon the land.'

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE

He spake bare truth; for far and near
From every side came noisy swarms 626
Of Peasants in their homely gear;
And, mixed with these, to Brancepeth
came
Grave Gentry of estate and name,
And Captains known for worth in arms;
And prayed the Earls in self-defence 631
To rise, and prove their innocence.—
'Rise, noble Earls, put forth your might
For holy Church, and the People's right!'

The Norton fixed, at this demand, 635
His eye upon Northumberland,
And said; 'The Minds of Men will own
No loyal rest while England's Crown
Remains without an Heir, the bait
Of strife and factions desperate; 640
Who, paying deadly hate in kind
Through all things else, in this can find
A mutual hope, a common mind;
And plot, and pant to overwhelm
All ancient honour in the realm. 645
—Brave Earls! to whose heroic veins
Our noblest blood is given in trust,
To you a suffering State complains,
And ye must raise her from the dust.
With wishes of still bolder scope 650
On you we look, with dearest hope;
Even for our Altars—for the prize
In Heaven, of life that never dies;
For the old and holy Church we mourn,
And must in joy to her return. 655
Behold!'—and from his Son whose stand
Was on his right, from that guardian
hand

He took the Banner, and unfurled
The precious folds—'behold,' said he,
'The ransom of a sinful world; 660
Let this your preservation be;
The wounds of hands and feet and side,
And the sacred Cross on which Jesus died.
—This bring I from an ancient hearth,
These Records wrought in pledge of love
By hands of no ignoble birth, 666
A Maid o'er whom the blessed Dove
Vouchsafed in gentleness to brood
While she the holy work pursued.'
'Uplift the Standard!' was the cry 670
From all the listeners that stood round,
'Plant it,—by this we live or die.'
The Norton ceased not for that sound,
But said; 'The prayer which ye have
heard,
Much injured Earls! by these preferred,
Is offered to the Saints, the sigh 676
Of tens of thousands, secretly.'
'Uplift it!' cried once more the Band,
And then a thoughtful pause ensued:
'Uplift it!' said Northumberland— 680
Whereat from all the multitude
Who saw the Banner reared on high
In all its dread emblazonry
A voice of uttermost joy brake out:

The transport was rolled down the river
of Were, 685
And Durham, the time-honoured Dur-
ham, did hear,
And the towers of Saint Cuthbert were
stirred by the shout!

Now was the North in arms:—they
shine
In warlike trim from Tweed to Tyne,
At Percy's voice: and Neville sees 690
His Followers gathering in from Tees,
From Werc, and all the little rills
Concealed among the forked hills—
Seven hundred Knights, Retainers all
Of Neville, at their Master's call 695
Had sate together in Raby Hall!
Such strength that Earldom held of yore;
Nor wanted at this time rich store
Of well-appointed chivalry.
—Not loth the sleepy lance to wield, 700
And greet the old paternal shield,
They heard the summons;—and, further-
more,
Horsemen and Foot of each degree,
Unbound by pledge of fealty,
Appeared, with free and open hate 705
Of novelties in Church and State;
Knight, burgher, yeoman, and esquire,
And Romish priest, in priest's attire.
And thus, in arms, a zealous Band
Proceeding under joint command, 710
To Durham first their course they bear;
And in Saint Cuthbert's ancient seat
Sang mass,—and tore the book of
prayer,—
And trod the bible beneath their feet.

Thence marching southward smooth
and free 715
'They mustered their host at Wetherby,
Full sixteen thousand fair to see;'¹
The Choicest Warriors of the North!
But none for beauty and for worth 719
Like those eight Sons—who, in a ring,
(Ripe men, or blooming in life's spring)
Each with a lance, erect and tall,
A falchion, and a buckler small, 723
Stood by their Sire, on Clifford-moor,
To guard the Standard which he bore.
On foot they girt their Father round;
And so will keep the appointed ground
Where'er their march: no steed will he
Henceforth bestride;—triumphantly
He stands upon the grassy sod, 730
Trusting himself to the earth, and God.
Rare sight to embolden and inspire!
Proud was the field of Sons and Sire;
Of him the most; and, sooth to say,
No shape of man in all the array 735
So graced the sunshine of that day.
The monumental pomp of age
Was with this goodly Personage;

¹ From the Old Ballad.

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE

A stature undepressed in size,
Unbent, which rather seemed to rise, 740
In open victory o'er the weight
Of seventy years, to loftier height;
Magnific limbs of withered state;
A face to fear and venerate; 744
Eyes dark and strong; and on his head
Bright locks of silver hair, thick spread,
Which a brown morion half-concealed,
Light as a hunter's of the field;
And thus, with girdle round his waist,
Whereon the Banner-staff might rest 750
At need, he stood, advancing high
The glittering, floating Pageantry.

Who sees him?—thousands see, and
One
With unparticipated gaze;
Who, 'mong those thousands, friend hath
none, 755
And treads in solitary ways.
He, following wheresoe'er he might,
Hath watched the Banner from afar,
As shepherds watch a lonely star,
Or mariners the distant light 760
That guides them through a stormy night.
And now, upon a chosen plot
Of rising ground, yon heathy spot!
He takes alone his far-off stand,
With breast unmailed, unweaponed hand.
Bold is his aspect; but his eye 766
Is pregnant with anxiety,
While, like a tutelary Power,
He there stands fixed from hour to hour:
Yet sometimes in more humble guise 770
Upon the turf-clad height he lies
Stretched, herdsman-like, as if to bask
In sunshine were his only task,
Or by his mantle's help to find
A shelter from the nipping wind: 775
And thus, with short oblivion blest,
His weary spirits gather rest.
Again he lifts his eyes; and lo!
The pageant glancing to and fro;
And hope is awakened by the sight, 780
He thence may learn, ere fall of night,
Which way the tide is doomed to flow.

To London were the Chieftains bent;
But what avails the bold intent?
A Royal army is gone forth 785
To quell the RISING OF THE NORTH;
They march with Dudley at their head,
And, in seven days' space, will to York
be led!—
Can such a mighty host be raised
Thus suddenly, and brought so near? 790
The Earls upon each other gazed,
And Neville's cheek grew pale with fear;
For, with a high and valiant name,
He bore a heart of timid frame;
And bold if both had been, yet they 795
'Against so many may not stay.'¹

¹ From the Old Ballad.

Back therefore will they hie to seize
A strong Hold on the banks of Tees;
There wait a favourable hour,
Until Lord Dacre with his power 800
From Naworth come; and Howard's aid
Be with them openly displayed.

While through the Host, from man to
man,
A rumour of this purpose ran,
The Standard trusting to the care 805
Of him who heretofore did bear
That charge, impatient Norton sought
The Chieftains to unfold his thought,
And thus abruptly spake;—'We yield
(And can it be?) an unfought field!—
How oft has strength, the strength of
heaven, 811
To few triumphantly been given!
Still do our very children boast
Of mitred Thurston—what a Host
He conquered!—Saw we not the Plain
(And flying shall behold again) 816
Where faith was proved?—while to battle
moved
The Standard, on the Sacred Wain
That bore it, compassed round by a bold
Fraternity of Barons old; 820
And with those grey-haired champions
stood,
Under the saintly ensigns three,
The infant Heir of Mowbray's blood—
All confident of victory!— 824
Shall Percy blush, then, for his name?
Must Westmoreland be asked with shame
Whose were the numbers, where the loss,
In that other day of Neville's Cross?
When the Prior of Durham with holy hand
Raised, as the Vision gave command, 830
Saint Cuthbert's Relic—far and near
Kenned on the point of a lofty spear;
While the Monks prayed in Maiden's
Bower
To God descending in his power.
Less would not at our need be due 835
To us, who war against the Untrue;—
The delegates of Heaven we rise,
Convoked the impious to chastise:
We, we, the sanctities of old
Would re-establish and uphold: 840
Be warned!—His zeal the Chiefs con-
founded,
But word was given, and the trumpet
sounded:
Back through the melancholy Host
Went Norton, and resumed his post.
Alas! thought he, and have I borne 845
This Banner raised with joyful pride,
This hope of all posterity,
By those dread symbols sanctified;
Thus to become at once the scorn
Of babbling winds as they go by, 850
A spot of shame to the sun's bright eye,
To the light clouds a mockery!

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE

—'Even these poor eight of mine would stem—'

Half to himself, and half to them 854
He spake—'would stem, or quell, a force
Ten times their number, man and horse;
This by their own unaided might,
Without their father in their sight,
Without the Cause for which they fight;
A Cause, which on a needful day 860
Would breed us thousands brave as they.'

—So speaking, he his reverend head
Raised toward that Imagery once more:
But the familiar prospect shed
Despondency unfelt before: 865
A shock of intimations vain,
Dismay, and superstitious pain,
Fell on him, with the sudden thought
Of her by whom the work was wrought:—
Oh! wherefore was her countenance 870
bright

With love divine and gentle light?
She would not, could not, disobey,
But her Faith leaned another way.
Ill tears she wept; I saw them fall,
I overheard her as she spake 875
Sad words to that mute Animal,
The White Doe, in the hawthorn brake;
She steeped, but not for Jesu's sake,
This Cross in tears: by her, and One
Unworthier far we are undone— 880
Her recreant Brother—he prevailed
Over that tender Spirit—assailed
Too oft, alas! by her whose head
In the cold grave hath long been laid:
She first in reason's dawn beguiled 885
Her docile, unsuspecting Child:
Far back—far back my mind must go
To reach the well-spring of this woe!

While thus he brooded, music sweet
Of border tunes was played to cheer 890
The footsteps of a quick retreat;
But Norton lingered in the rear,
Stung with sharp thoughts; and, ere the
last

From his distracted brain was cast,
Before his Father, Francis stood, 895
And spake in firm and earnest mood.

'Though here I bend a suppliant knee
In reverence, and unarmed, I bear
In your indignant thoughts my share;
Am grieved this backward march to see
So careless and disorderly. 901
I scorn your Chiefs—men who would lead,
And yet want courage at their need:
Then look at them with open eyes!
Deserve they further sacrifice?— 905
If—when they shrink, nor dare oppose
In open field their gathering foes,
(And fast, from this decisive day,
Yon multitude must melt away;)
If now I ask a grace not claimed 910
While ground was left for hope; unblamed

Be an endeavour that can do
No injury to them or you.
My Father! I would help to find
A place of shelter, till the rage 915
Of cruel men do like the wind
Exhaust itself and sink to rest;
Be Brother now to Brother joined!
Admit me in the equipage
Of your misfortunes, that at least, 920
Whatever fate remain behind,
I may bear witness in my breast
To your nobility of mind!'

'Thou Enemy, my bane and blight!
Oh! bold to fight the Coward's fight 925
Against all good'—but why declare,
At length, the issue of a prayer
Which love had prompted, yielding scope
Too free to one bright moment's hope?
Suffice it that the Son, who strove 930
With fruitless effort to allay
That passion, prudently gave way;
Nor did he turn aside to prove
His Brothers' wisdom or their love—
But calmly from the spot withdrew; 935
His best endeavours to renew,
Should e'er a kindlier time ensue.

CANTO FOURTH

'Tis night: in silence looking down,
The Moon from cloudless ether sees
A Camp, and a beleaguered Town, 940
And Castle like a stately crown
On the steep rocks of winding Tees;—
And southward far, with moor between,
Hill-top, and flood, and forest green, 944
The bright Moon sees that valley small
Where Rylstone's old sequestered Hall
A venerable image yields
Of quiet to the neighbouring fields;
While from one pillared chimney breathes
The smoke, and mounts in silver wreaths.
—The courts are hushed;—for timely 951
sleep

The greyhounds to their kennel creep;
The peacock in the broad ash-tree
Aloft is roosted for the night,
He who in proud prosperity 955
Of colours manifold and bright
Walked round, affronting the daylight;
And higher still, above the bower
Where he is perched, from yon lone
Tower
The hall-clock in the clear moonshine 960
With glittering finger points at nine.

Ah! who could think that sadness here
Hath any sway? or pain, or fear?
A soft and lulling sound is heard
Of streams inaudible by day; 965
The garden pool's dark surface, stirred
By the night insects in their play,
Breaks into dimples small and bright;
A thousand, thousand rings of light

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE

That shape themselves and disappear
 Almost as soon as seen:—and lo! 971
 Not distant far, the milk-white Doe—
 The same who quietly was feeding
 On the green herb, and nothing heeding,
 When Francis, uttering to the Maid 975
 His last words in the yew-tree shade,
 Involved whate'er by love was brought
 Out of his heart, or crossed his thought,
 Or chance presented to his eye,
 In one sad sweep of destiny— 980
 The same fair Creature, who hath found
 Her way into forbidden ground;
 Where now—within this spacious plot
 For pleasure made, a goodly spot,
 With lawns and beds of flowers, and
 shades 985
 Of trellis-work in long arcades,
 And cirque and crescent framed by wall
 Of close-clipt foliage green and tall,
 Converging walks, and fountains gay,
 And terraces in trim array— 990
 Beneath yon cypress spiring high,
 With pine and cedar spreading wide
 Their darksome boughs on either side,
 In open moonlight doth she lie;
 Happy as others of her kind, 995
 That, far from human neighbourhood,
 Range unrestricted as the wind,
 Through park, or chase, or savage wood.

But see the consecrated Maid
 Emerging from a cedar shade 1000
 To open moonshine, where the Doe
 Beneath the cypress-spire is laid;
 Like a patch of April snow—
 Upon a bed of herbage green,
 Lingered in a woody glade 1005
 Or behind a rocky screen—
 Lonely relic! which, if seen
 By the shepherd, is passed by
 With an inattentive eye.
 Nor more regard doth She bestow 1010
 Upon the uncomplaining Doe
 Now couched at ease, though oft this day
 Not unperplexed nor free from pain,
 When she had tried, and tried in vain,
 Approaching in her gentle way, 1015
 To win some look of love, or gain
 Encouragement to sport or play;
 Attempts which still the heart-sick Maid
 Rejected, or with slight repaid. 1019

Yet Emily is soothed;—the breeze
 Came fraught with kindly sympathies.
 As she approached yon rustic Shed
 Hung with late-flowering woodbine,
 spread
 Along the walls and overhead,
 The fragrance of the breathing flowers
 Revived a memory of those hours 1026
 When here, in this remote alcove,
 (While from the pendent woodbine came
 Like odours, sweet as if the same)

A fondly-anxious Mother strove 1030
 To teach her salutary fears
 And mysteries above her years.
 Yes, she is soothed: an Image faint,
 And yet not faint—a presence bright
 Returns to her—that blessed Saint 1035
 Who with mild looks and language mild
 Instructed here her darling Child,
 While yet a prattler on the knee,
 To worship in simplicity
 The invisible God, and take for guide
 The faith reformed and purified. 1041

'Tis flown—the Vision, and the sense
 Of that beguiling influence;
 'But oh! thou Angel from above,
 Mute Spirit of maternal love, 1045
 That stood'st before my eyes, more clear
 Than ghosts are fabled to appear
 Sent upon embassies of fear;
 As thou thy presence hast to me
 Vouchsafed, in radiant ministry 1050
 Descend on Francis; nor forbear
 To greet him with a voice, and say;—
 "If hope be a rejected stay,
 Do thou, my christian Son, beware
 Of that most lamentable snare, 1055
 The self-reliance of despair!"

Then from within the embowered
 retreat
 Where she had found a grateful seat
 Perturbed she issues. She will go!
 Herself will follow to the war, 1060
 And clasp her Father's knees:—ah, no!
 She meets the insuperable bar,
 The injunction by her Brother laid;
 His parting charge—but ill obeyed—
 That interdicted all debate, 1065
 All prayer for this cause or for that;
 All efforts that would turn aside
 The headstrong current of their fate:
Her duty is to stand and wait;
 In resignation to abide 1070
 The shock, and finally secure
 O'er pain and grief a triumph pure.
 —She feels it, and her pangs are checked.
 But now, as silently she paced
 The turf, and thought by thought was
 chased, 1075
 Came One who, with sedate respect,
 Approached, and, greeting her, thus
 spake;
 'An old man's privilege I take:
 Dark is the time—a woeful day!
 Dear daughter of affliction, say 1080
 How can I serve you? point the way.'

'Rights have you, and may well be bold:
 You with my Father have grown old
 In friendship—strive—for his sake go—
 Turn from us all the coming woe: 1085
 This would I beg; but on my mind
 A passive stillness is enjoined.

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE

On you, if room for mortal aid
Be left, is no restriction laid;
You not forbidden to recline
With hope upon the Will divine.' 1090

'Hope,' said the old Man, 'must abide
With all of us, whate'er betide.
In Craven's Wilds is many-a den,
To shelter persecuted men: 1095
Far under ground is many a cave,
Where they might lie as in the grave,
Until this storm hath ceased to rave:
Or let them cross the River Tweed,
And be at once from peril freed!' 1100

'Ah tempt me not!' she faintly sighed;
'I will not counsel nor exhort,
With my condition satisfied;
But you, at least, may make report
Of what befalls;—be this your task—
This may be done;—'tis all I ask!' 1106

'She spake—and from the Lady's sight
The Sire, unconscious of his age,
Departed promptly as a Page
Bound on some errand of delight. 1110
—The noble Francis—wise as brave,
Thought he, may want not skill to save.
With hopes in tenderness concealed,
Unarmed he followed to the field; 1114
Him will I seek: the insurgent Powers
Are now besieging Barnard's Towers,—
'Grant that the Moon which shines this
night
May guide them in a prudent flight!'

But quick the turns of chance and
change, 1119
And knowledge has a narrow range;
Whence idle fears, and needless pain,
And wishes blind, and efforts vain.—
The Moon may shine, but cannot be
Their guide in flight—already she
Hath witnessed their captivity. 1225
She saw the desperate assault
Upon that hostile castle made;—
But dark and dismal is the vault
Where Norton and his sons are laid!
Disastrous issue!—he had said 1130
'This night yon faithless Towers must
yield,
Or we for ever quit the field.
—Neville is utterly dismayed,
For promise fails of Howard's aid;
And Dacre to our call replies 1135
That he is unprepared to rise.
My heart is sick;—this weary pause
Must needs be fatal to our cause.
The breach is open—on the wall,
This night,—the Banner shall be planted!'
—'Twas done: his Sons were with him—
all; 1141
They belt him round with hearts un-
daunted

And others follow;—Sire and Son
Leap down into the court;—'Tis won!'
They shout aloud—but Heaven decreed
That with their joyful shout should close
The triumph of a desperate deed
Which struck with terror friends and
foes!

The friend shrinks back—the foe recoils
From Norton and his filial band; 1150
But they, now caught within the toils,
Against a thousand cannot stand;—
The foe from numbers courage drew,
And overpowered that gallant few.
'A rescue for the Standard!' cried 1155
The Father from within the walls;
But, see, the sacred Standard falls!—
Confusion through the Camp spread
wide:
Some fled; and some their fears detained:
But ere the Moon had sunk to rest 1160
In her pale chambers of the west,
Of that rash levy nought remained.

CANTO FIFTH

HIGH on a point of rugged ground
Among the wastes of Rylstone Fell,
Above the loftiest ridge or mound 1165
Where foresters or shepherds dwell,
An edifice of warlike frame
Stands single—Norton Tower its name—
It fronts all quarters, and looks round
O'er path and road, and plain and dell,
Dark moor, and gleam of pool and stream,
Upon a prospect without bound.

The summit of this bold ascent—
Though bleak and bare, and seldom free
As Pendle-hill or Pennygent 1175
From wind, or frost, or vapours wet—
Had often heard the sound of glee
When there the youthful Nortons met,
To practise games and archery: 1179
How proud and happy they! the crowd
Of Lookers-on how pleased and proud!
And from the scorching noon-tide sun,
From showers, or when the prize was won,
They to the Tower withdrew, and there
Would mirth run round, with generous
fare; 1185
And the stern old Lord of Rylstone-hall
Was happiest, proudest, of them all!

But now, his Child, with anguish pale,
Upon the height walks to and fro;
'Tis well that she hath heard the tale,
Received the bitterness of woe: 1191
For she *had* hoped, had hoped and feared,
Such rights did feeble nature claim;
And oft her steps had hither steered,
Though not unconscious of self-blame;
For she her brother's charge revered, 1196
His farewell words; and by the same,
Yea, by her brother's very name,
Had, in her solitude, been cheered. 1199

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE

Beside the lonely watch-tower stood
That grey-haired Man of gentle blood,
Who with her Father had grown old
In friendship; rival hunters they;
And fellow warriors in their day;
To Rylstone he the tidings brought; 1205
Then on this height the Maid had sought,
And, gently as he could, had told
The end of that dire Tragedy,
Which it had been his lot to see.

To him the Lady turned; "You said
That Francis lives, *he* is not dead?" 1211

"Your noble brother hath been spared;
To take his life they have not dared;
On him and on his high endeavour 1214
The light of praise shall shine for ever!
Nor did he (such Heaven's will) in vain
His solitary course maintain;
Not vainly struggled in the might
Of duty, seeing with clear sight;
He was their comfort to the last, 1220
Their joy till every pang was past.

"I witnessed when to York they came—
What, Lady, if their feet were tied;
They might deserve a good Man's blame;
But marks of infamy and shame— 1225
These were their triumph, these their
pride;

Nor wanted 'mid the pressing crowd
Deep feeling, that found utterance loud,
"Lo, Francis comes," there were who
cried,

"A Prisoner once, but now set free! 1230
'Tis well, for he the worst defied
Through force of natural piety;
He rose not in this quarrel, he,
For concord's sake and England's good,
Suit to his Brothers often made 1235
With tears, and of his Father prayed—
And when he had in vain withstood
Their purpose—then did he divide,
He parted from them; but at their side
Now walks in unanimity, 1240
Then peace to cruelty and scorn,
While to the prison they are borne,
Peace, peace to all indignity!"

"And so in Prison were they laid—
Oh hear me, hear me, gentle Maid, 1245
For I am come with power to bless,
By scattering gleams, through your dis-
tress,
Of a redeeming happiness.
Me did a reverent pity move
And privilege of ancient love; 1250
And, in your service making bold,
Entrance I gained to that strong-hold.

"Your Father gave me cordial greet-
ing;

But to his purposes, that burned
Within him, instantly returned: 1255
He was commanding and entreating,

And said—"We need not stop, my Son!
Thoughts press, and time is hurrying
on"—

And so to Francis he renewed 1259
His words, more calmly thus pursued.

"Might this our enterprise have sped,
Change wide and deep the Land had seen,
A renovation from the dead,
A spring-tide of immortal green: 1264
The darksome altars would have blazed
Like stars when clouds are rolled away;
Salvation to all eyes that gazed,
Once more the Rood had been upraised
To spread its arms, and stand for aye.
Then, then—had I survived to see 1270
New life in Bolton Priory;
The voice restored, the eye of Truth
Re-opened that inspired my youth;
To see her in her pomp arrayed—
This Banner (for such vow I made) 1275
Should on the consecrated breast
Of that same Temple have found rest:
I would myself have hung it high,
Fit offering of glad victory! 1279

"A shadow of such thought remains
To cheer this sad and pensive time;
A solemn fancy yet sustains
One feeble Being—bids me climb
Even to the last—one effort more
To attest my Faith, if not restore. 1285

"Hear then," said he, "while I im-
part,
My Son, the last wish of my heart.
The Banner strive thou to regain;
And, if the endeavour prove not vain,
Bear it—to whom if not to thee 1290
Shall I this lonely thought consign?—
Bear it to Bolton Priory,
And lay it on Saint Mary's shrine;
To wither in the sun and breeze
'Mid those decaying sanctities. 1295
There let at least the gift be laid,
The testimony there displayed;
Bold proof that with no selfish aim,
But for lost Faith and Christ's dear name,
I helmeted a brow though white, 1300
And took a place in all men's sight;
Yea, offered up this noble Brood,
This fair unrivalled Brotherhood,
And turned away from thee, my Son!
And left—but be the rest unsaid, 1305
The name untouched, the tear unshed;—
My wish is known, and I have done:
Now promise, grant this one request,
This dying prayer, and be thou blest!"

"Then Francis answered—"Trust thy
Son, 1310
For, with God's will, it shall be done!"—

"The pledge obtained, the solemn word
Thus scarcely given, a noise was heard,

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE

And Officers appeared in state
To lead the prisoners to their fate. 1315
They rose, oh! wherefore should I fear
To tell, or, Lady, you to hear?
They rose—embraces none were given—
They stood like trees when earth and
heaven 1319
Are calm; they knew each other's worth,
And reverently the Band went forth.
They met, when they had reached the
door,
One with profane and harsh intent
Placed there—that he might go before
And, with that rueful Banner borne 1325
Aloft in sign of taunting scorn,
Conduct them to their punishment:
So cruel Sussex, unrestrained
By human feeling, had ordained.
The unhappy Banner Francis saw, 1330
And, with a look of calm command
Inspiring universal awe,
He took it from the soldier's hand;
And all the people that stood round 1334
Confirmed the deed in peace profound.
—High transport did the Father shed
Upon his Son—and they were led,
Led on, and yielded up their breath;
Together died, a happy death!—
But Francis, soon as he had braved 1340
That insult, and the Banner saved,
Athwart the unresisting tide
Of the spectators occupied
In admiration or dismay,
Bore instantly his Charge away.' 1345
These things, which thus had in the
sight
And hearing passed of Him who stood
With Emily, on the Watch-tower height,
In Rylstone's woeful neighbourhood,
He told; and oftentimes with voice 1350
Of power to comfort or rejoice;
For deepest sorrows that aspire
Go high, no transport ever higher.
'Yes—God is rich in mercy,' said
The old Man to the silent Maid, 1355
'Yet, Lady! shines, through this black
night,
One star of aspect heavenly bright;
Your brother lives—he lives—is come
Perhaps already to his home;
Then let us leave this dreary place.' 1360
She yielded, and with gentle pace,
Though without one uplifted look,
To Rylstone-hall her way she took.

CANTO SIXTH

Why comes not Francis?—From the
doleful City 1364
He fled,—and, in his flight, could hear
The death-sounds of the Minster-bell:
That sullen stroke pronounced farewell
To Marmaduke, cut off from pity!
To Ambrose that! and then a knell

For him, the sweet half-opened Flower!
For all—all dying in one hour! 1371
—Why comes not Francis? Thoughts of
love
Should bear him to his Sister dear
With the fleet motion of a dove;
Yea, like a heavenly messenger 1375
Of speediest wing, should he appear.
Why comes he not?—for westward fast
Along the plain of York he past;
Reckless of what impels or leads,
Unchecked he hurries on;—nor heeds
The sorrow, through the Villages, 1381
Spread by triumphant cruelties
Of vengeful military force,
And punishment without remorse.
He marked not, heard not, as he fled;
All but the suffering heart was dead 1386
For him abandoned to blank awe,
To vacancy, and horror strong:
And the first object which he saw,
With conscious sight, as he swept along—
It was the Banner in his hand! 1391
He felt—and made a sudden stand.

He looked about like one betrayed:
What hath he done? what promise made?
Oh weak, weak moment! to what end
Can such a vain oblation tend, 1396
And he the Bearer?—Can he go
Carrying this instrument of woe,
And find, find anywhere, a right 1399
To excuse him in his Country's sight?
No; will not all men deem the change
A downward course, perverse and
strange?
Here is it;—but how? when? must she,
The unoffending Emily,
Again this piteous object see? 1405

Such conflict long did he maintain,
Nor liberty nor rest could gain:
His own life into danger brought
By this sad burden—even that thought,
Exciting self-suspicion strong, 1410
Swayed the brave man to his wrong.
And how—unless it were the sense
Of all-disposing Providence,
Its will unquestionably shown—
How has the Banner clung so fast 1415
To a palsied, and unconscious hand;
Clung to the hand to which it passed
Without impediment? And why
But that Heaven's purpose might be known
Doth now no hindrance meet his eye,
No intervention, to withstand 1421
Fulfilment of a Father's prayer
Breathed to a Son forgiven, and blest
When all resentments were at rest,
And life in death laid the heart bare?—
Then, like a spectre sweeping by, 1426
Rushed through his mind the prophecy
Of utter desolation made
To Emily in the yew-tree shade:

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE

He sighed, submitting will and power
To the stern embrace of that grasping
hour. 1431

'No choice is left, the deed is mine—
Dead are they, dead!—and I will go,
And, for their sakes, come weal or woe,
Will lay the Relic on the shrine.' 1435

So forward with a steady will
He went, and traversed plain and hill;
And up the vale of Wharf his way
Pursued;—and, at the dawn of day,
Attained a summit whence his eyes 1440
Could see the Tower of Bolton rise.
There Francis for a moment's space
Made halt—but hark! a noise behind
Of horsemen at an eager pace!
He heard, and with misgiving mind.
—'Tis Sir George Bowes who leads the
Band: 1446

They come, by cruel Sussex sent;
Who, when the Nortons from the hand
Of death had drunk their punishment,
Bethought him, angry and ashamed, 1450
How Francis, with the Banner claimed
As his own charge, had disappeared,
By all the standers-by revered.
His whole bold carriage (which had
quelled
Thus far the Opposer, and repelled 1455
All censure, enterprise so bright
That even bad men had vainly striven
Against that overcoming light)
Was then reviewed, and prompt word
given,
That to what place soever fled 1460
He should be seized, alive or dead.

The troop of horse have gained the height
Where Francis stood in open sight.
They hem him round—'Behold the proof,'
They cried, 'the Ensign in his hand! 1465
He did not arm, he walked aloof!
For why?—to save his Father's land;
Worst Traitor of them all is he,
A Traitor dark and cowardly!'

'I am no Traitor,' Francis said, 1470
'Though this unhappy freight I bear;
And must not part with. But beware;—
Err not, by hasty zeal misled,
Nor do a suffering Spirit wrong,
Whose self-reproaches are too strong!'
At this he from the beaten road 1476
Retreated towards a brake of thorn,
That like a place of vantage showed;
And there stood bravely, though forlorn.
In self-defence with warlike brow 1480
He stood,—nor weaponless was now;
He from a Soldier's hand had snatched
A spear,—and, so protected, watched
The Assailants, turning round and round;
But from behind with treacherous wound
A Spearman brought him to the ground.

The guardian lance, as Francis fell,
Dropped from him; but his other hand
The Banner clenched; till, from out the
Band,

One, the most eager for the prize, 1490
Rushed in; and—while, O grief to tell!
A glimmering sense still left, with eyes
Unclosed the noble Francis lay—
Seized it, as hunters seize their prey;
But not before the warm life-blood 1495
Had tinged more deeply, as it flowed,
The wounds the brodered Banner
showed,
Thy fatal work, O Maiden, innocent as
good!

Proudly the Horsemen bore away
The Standard; and where Francis lay
There was he left alone, unwept, 1501
And for two days unnoticed slept.
For at that time bewildering fear
Possessed the country, far and near;
But, on the third day, passing by 1505
One of the Norton Tenantry
Espied the uncovered Corse; the Man
Shrunk as he recognised the face,
And to the nearest homesteads ran
And called the people to the place. 1510
—How desolate is Rylstone-hall!
This was the instant thought of all;
And if the lonely Lady there
Should be; to her they cannot bear
This weight of anguish and despair. 1515
So, when upon sad thoughts had prest
Thoughts sadder still, they deemed it
best
That, if the Priest should yield assent
And no one hinder their intent,
Then, they, for Christian pity's sake, 1520
In holy ground a grave would make;
And straightway buried he should be
In the Churchyard of the Priory.

Apart, some little space, was made
The grave where Francis must be laid.
In no confusion or neglect 1526
This did they,—but in pure respect
That he was born of gentle blood;
And that there was no neighbourhood
Of kindred for him in that ground: 1530
So to the Churchyard they are bound,
Bearing the body on a bier;
And psalms they sing—a holy sound
That hill and vale with sadness hear.

But Emily hath raised her head, 1535
And is again disquieted;
She must behold!—so many gone,
Where is the solitary One?
And forth from Rylstone-hall stepped
she,—
To seek her Brother forth she went, 1540
And tremblingly her course she bent
Toward Bolton's ruined Priory.

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE

She comes, and in the vale hath heard
The funeral dirge;—she sees the knot
Of people, sees them in one spot— 1545
And darting like a wounded bird
She reached the grave, and with her breast
Upon the ground received the rest,—
The consummation, the whole ruth
And sorrow of this final truth! 1550

CANTO SEVENTH

¹Powers there are
That touch each other to the quick—in modes
Which the gross world no sense hath to perceive,
No soul to dream of.¹

THOU Spirit, whose angelic hand
Was to the harp a strong command,
Called the submissive strings to wake
In glory for this Maiden's sake,
Say, Spirit! whither hath she fled 1555
To hide her poor afflicted head?
What mighty forest in its gloom
Enfolds her?—is a rifted tomb
Within the wilderness her seat?
Some island which the wild waves beat—
Is that the Sufferer's last retreat? 1561
Or some aspiring rock, that shrouds
Its perilous front in mists and clouds?
High-climbing rock, low sunless dale,
Sea, desert, what do these avail? 1565
Oh take her anguish and her fears
Into a deep recess of years!

'Tis done;—despoil and desolation
O'er Rylstone's fair domain have blown;
Pools, terraces, and walks are sown 1570
With weeds; the bowers are overthrown,
Or have given way to slow mutation,
While, in their ancient habitation
The Norton name hath been unknown.
The lordly Mansion of its pride 1575
Is stripped; the ravage hath spread wide
Through park and field, a perishing
That mocks the gladness of the Spring!
And, with this silent gloom agreeing,
Appears a joyless human Being, 1580
Of aspect such as if the waste
Were under her dominion placed.
Upon a primrose bank, her throne
Of quietness, she sits alone;
Among the ruins of a wood, 1585
Erewhile a covert bright and green,
And where full many a brave tree stood,
That used to spread its boughs, and ring
With the sweet bird's carolling,
Behold her, like a virgin Queen, 1590
Neglecting in imperial state
These outward images of fate,
And carrying inward a serene
And perfect sway, through many a
thought
Of chance and change, that hath been
brought 1595

¹ See *Address to Kilchurn Castle (Memorials of a Tour in Scotland, 1803)*, ll. 6–9.—Ed.

To the subjection of a holy,
Though stern and rigorous, melancholy!
The like authority, with grace
Of awfulness, is in her face,—
There hath she fixed it; yet it seems 1600
To o'ershadow by no native right
That face, which cannot lose the gleams,
Lose utterly the tender gleams,
Of gentleness and meek delight,
And loving-kindness ever bright: 1605
Such is her sovereign mien:—her dress
(A vest with woollen cincture tied,
A hood of mountain-wool undyed)
Is homely,—fashioned to express
A wandering Pilgrim's humbleness. 1610

And she *hath* wandered, long and far,
Beneath the light of sun and star;
Hath roamed in trouble and in grief,
Driven forward like a withered leaf,
Yea, like a ship at random blown 1615
To distant places and unknown.
But now she dares to seek a haven
Among her native wilds of Craven;
Hath seen again her Father's roof,
And put her fortitude to proof; 1620
The mighty sorrow hath been borne,
And she is thoroughly forlorn:
Her soul doth in itself stand fast,
Sustained by memory of the past
And strength of Reason; held above
The infirmities of mortal love; 1626
Undaunted, lofty, calm, and stable,
And awfully impenetrable.

And so—beneath a mouldered tree,
A self-surviving leafless oak 1630
By unregarded age from stroke
Of ravage saved—sate Emily.
There did she rest, with head reclined,
Herself most like a stately flower,
(Such have I seen) whom chance of birth
Hath separated from its kind, 1636
To live and die in a shady bower,
Single on the gladsome earth.

When, with a noise like distant thunder,
A troop of deer came sweeping by; 1640
And, suddenly, behold a wonder!
For One, among those rushing deer,
A single One, in mid career
Hath stopped, and fixed her large full eye
Upon the Lady Emily; 1645
A Doe most beautiful, clear-white,
A radiant creature, silver-bright!

Thus checked, a little while it stayed;
A little thoughtful pause it made;
And then advanced with stealth-like
pace, 1650
Drew softly near her, and more near—
Looked round—but saw no cause for
fear;
So to her feet the Creature came,

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE

And laid its head upon her knee,
And looked into the Lady's face, 1655
A look of pure benignity,
And fond unclouded memory.
It is, thought Emily, the same,
The very Doe of other years!—
The pleading look the Lady viewed, 1660
And, by her gushing thoughts subdued,
She melted into tears—
A flood of tears that flowed apace
Upon the happy Creature's face.

Oh, moment ever blest! O Pair 1665
Beloved of Heaven, Heaven's chosen care,
This was for you a precious greeting;
And may it prove a fruitful meeting!
Joined are they, and the sylvan Doe
Can she depart? can she forego 1670
The Lady, once her playful peer,
And now her sainted Mistress dear?
And will not Emily receive
This lovely chronicler of things
Long past, delights and sorrows?
Lone Sufferer! will not she believe 1676
The promise in that speaking face;
And welcome, as a gift of grace,
The saddest thought the Creature brings?

That day, the first of a re-union 1680
Which was to teem with high communion,
That day of balmy April weather,
They tarried in the wood together.
And when, ere fall of evening dew, 1684
She from her sylvan haunt withdrew,
The White Doe tracked with faithful pace
The Lady to her dwelling-place;
That nook where, on paternal ground,
A habitation she had found,
The Master of whose humble board 1690
Once owned her Father for his Lord;
A hut, by tufted trees defended,
Where Rylstone brook with Wharf is
blended.

When Emily by morning light 1694
Went forth, the Doe stood there in sight.
She shrunk:—with one frail shock of pain
Received and followed by a prayer,
She saw the Creature once again;
Shun will she not, she feels, will bear;—
But, wheresoever she looked round, 1700
All now was trouble-haunted ground;
And therefore now she deems it good
Once more this restless neighbourhood
To leave.—Unwooded, yet unforbidden,
The White Doe followed up the vale,
Up to another cottage, hidden 1706
In the deep fork of Amerdale;
And there may Emily restore
Herself, in spots unseen before.
—Why tell of mossy rock, or tree, 1710
By lurking Dernbrook's pathless side,
Haunts of a strengthening amity
That calmed her, cheered, and fortified?

For she hath ventured now to read
Of time, and place, and thought, and
deed— 1715
Endless history that lies
In her silent Follower's eyes;
Who with a power like human reason
Discerns the favourable season,
Skilled to approach or to retire,— 1720
From looks conceiving her desire;
From look, deportment, voice, or mien,
That vary to the heart within.
If she too passionately wreathed
Her arms, or over-deeply breathed, 1725
Walked quick or slowly, every mood
In its degree was understood;
Then well may their accord be true,
And kindest intercourse ensue.
—Oh! surely 'twas a gentle rousing 1730
When she by sudden glimpse espied
The White Doe on the Mountain browsing,
Or in the meadow wandered wide!
How pleased, when down the Straggler
sank
Beside her, on some sunny bank! 1735
How soothed, when in thick bower en-
closed,
They, like a nested pair, reposed!
Fair Vision! when it crossed the Maid
Within some rocky cavern laid,
The dark cave's portal gliding by, 1740
White as whitest cloud on high
Floating through the azure sky.
—What now is left for pain or fear?
That Presence, dearer and more dear,
While they, side by side, were straying,
And the shepherd's pipe was playing,
Did now a very gladness yield 1747
At morning to the dewy field,
And with a deeper peace endued
The hour of moonlight solitude. 1750

With her Companion, in such frame
Of mind, to Rylstone back she came;
And, ranging through the wasted groves,
Received the memory of old loves,
Undisturbed and undistrest, 1755
Into a soul which now was blest
With a soft spring-day of holy,
Mild, and grateful, melancholy:
Not sunless gloom or unenlightened,
But by tender fancies brightened. 1760

When the bells of Rylstone played
Their sabbath music—'GOD US AYDE!'
That was the sound they seemed to speak;
Inscriptive legend which I ween
May on these holy bells be seen, 1765
That legend and her Grandsire's name;
And oftentimes the Lady meek
Had in her childhood read the same;
Words which she slighted at that day;
But now, when such sad change was
wrought, 1770
And of that lonely name she thought,

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE

The bells of Rylstone seemed to say,
While she sate listening in the shade,
With vocal music, 'GOD US AYDE';
And all the hills were glad to bear 1775
Their part in this effectual prayer.

Nor lacked she Reason's firmest power;
But with the White Doe at her side
Up would she climb to Norton Tower,
And thence look round her far and wide,
Her fate there measuring;—all is stilled,—
The weak One hath subdued her heart;
Behold the prophecy fulfilled, 1783
Fulfilled, and she sustains her part!
But here her Brother's words have failed;
Here hath a milder doom prevailed; 1786
That she, of him and all bereft,
Hath yet this faithful Partner left;
This one Associate that disproves
His words remains for her, and loves.
If tears are shed, they do not fall 1791
For loss of him—for one, or all;
Yet sometimes, sometimes doth she weep
Moved gently in her soul's soft sleep;
A few tears down her cheek descend 1795
For this her last and living Friend.

Bless, tender Hearts, their mutual lot,
And bless for both this savage spot;
Which Emily doth sacred hold
For reasons dear and manifold— 1800
Here hath she, here before her sight,
Close to the summit of this height,
The grassy rock-encircled Pound,
In which the Creature first was found.
So beautiful the timid Thrall 1805
(A spotless Youngling white as foam)
Her youngest Brother brought it home;
The youngest, then a lusty boy,
Bore it, or led, to Rylstone-hall
With heart brimful of pride and joy! 1810

But most to Bolton's sacred Pile,
On favouring nights, she loved to go;
There ranged through cloister, court, and
aisle,

Attended by the soft-paced Doe;
Nor feared she in the still moonshine
To look upon Saint Mary's shrine; 1816
Nor on the lonely turf that showed
Where Francis slept in his last abode.
For that she came; there oft she sate
Forlorn, but not disconsolate: 1820

And when she from the abyss returned
Of thought, she neither shrunk nor
mourned;

Was happy that she lived to greet
Her mute Companion as it lay
In love and pity at her feet; 1825
How happy in its turn to meet
The recognition! the mild glance
Beamed from that gracious countenance;
Communication, like the ray
Of a new morning, to the nature 1830
And prospects of the inferior Creature!

A mortal Song we sing, by dower
Encouraged of celestial power;
Power which the viewless Spirit shed
By whom we were first visited; 1835
Whose voice we heard, whose hand and
wings

Swept like a breeze the conscious strings,
When, left in solitude, erewhile
We stood before this ruined Pile, 1839
And, quitting unsubstantial dreams,
Sang in this Presence kindred themes;
Distress and desolation spread
Through human hearts, and pleasure
dead,—

Dead—but to live again on earth,
A second and yet nobler birth; 1845
Dire overthrow, and yet how high
The re-ascend in sanctity!
From fair to fairer; day by day
A more divine and loftier way!
Even such this blessed Pilgrim trod, 1850
By sorrow lifted towards her God;
Uplifted to the purest sky
Of undisturbed mortality.
Her own thoughts loved she; and could
bend

A dear look to her lowly Friend; 1855
There stopped; her thirst was satisfied
With what this innocent spring supplied:
Her sanction inwardly she bore,
And stood apart from human cares:
But to the world returned no more,
Although with no unwilling mind 1861
Help did she give at need, and joined
The Wharfdale peasants in their prayers.
At length, thus faintly, faintly tied
To earth, she was set free, and died. 1865
Thy soul, exalted Emily,
Maid of the blasted family,
Rose to the God from whom it came!
—In Rylstone Church her mortal frame
Was buried by her Mother's side. 1870

Most glorious sunset! and a ray
Survives—the twilight of this day—
In that fair Creature whom the fields
Support, and whom the forest shields;
Who, having filled a holy place, 1875
Partakes, in her degree, Heaven's grace;
And bears a memory and a mind
Raised far above the law of kind;
Haunting the spots with lonely cheer
Which her dear Mistress once held dear:
Loves most what Emily loved most—
The enclosure of this churchyard ground;
Here wanders like a gliding ghost,
And every sabbath here is found; 1884
Comes with the people when the bells
Are heard among the moorland dells,
Finds entrance through yon arch, where
way

Lies open on the sabbath day;
Here walks amid the mournful waste
Of prostrate altars, shrines defaced. 1890

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE

And floors encumbered with rich show
Of fret-work imagery laid low;
Paces softly, or makes halt,
By fractured cell, or tomb, or vault;
By plate of monumental brass 1895
Dim-gleaming among weeds and grass,
And sculptured Forms of Warriors brave:
But chiefly by that single grave,
That one sequestered hillock green,
The pensive visitant is seen. 1900

There doth the gentle Creature lie
With those adversities unmoved;
Calm spectacle, by earth and sky
In their benignity approved!
And aye, methinks, this hoary Pile, 1905
Subdued by outrage and decay,
Looks down upon her with a smile,
A gracious smile, that seems to say—
'Thou, thou art not a Child of Time,
But Daughter of the Eternal Prime!' 1910

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

IN SERIES ¹

[Composed mostly in 1821.—Published 1822.]

PART I

FROM THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY INTO BRITAIN TO THE CONSUMMATION OF THE PAPAL DOMINION

¹ A verse may catch a wandering Soul, that flies
Profounder Tracts, and by a blest surprise
Convert delight into a Sacrifice.²

I

INTRODUCTION

I, WHO accompanied with faithful pace
Cerulean Duddon from its cloud-fed
spring,
And loved with spirit ruled by his to sing
Of mountain-quiet and boon nature's
grace;
I, who essayed the nobler Stream to
trace 5
Of Liberty, and smote the plausible string
Till the checked torrent, proudly triumph-
ing,
Won for herself a lasting resting-place;
Now seek upon the heights of Time the
source
Of a HOLY RIVER, on whose banks are
found 10
Sweet pastoral flowers, and laurels that
have crowned
Full off the unworthy brow of lawless
force;
And, for delight of him who tracks its
course,
Immortal amaranth and palms abound.

II

CONJECTURES

If there be prophets on whose spirits rest
Past things, revealed like future, they can
tell
What Powers, presiding o'er the sacred well
Of Christian Faith, this savage Island
blessed
With its first bounty. Wandering through
the west, 5
Did holy Paul³ a while in Britain dwell,
And call the Fountain forth by miracle,
And with dread signs the nascent Stream
invest?
Or He, whose bonds dropped off, whose
prison doors
Flew open, by an Angel's voice unbarred?
Or some of humbler name, to these wild
shores 11
Storm-driven; who, having seen the cup
of woe
Pass from their Master, sojourned here to
guard
The precious Current they had taught to
flow?

¹ The *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* (first so called in 1837; previously *Ecclesiastical Sketches*) were written for the most part in 1821, and published in 1822. Chronological notes are attached only to those sonnets to which this observation does not apply.—Ed.

² This motto, from George Herbert, was added in 1827.—Ed.

³ See Note, p. 721.

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

III

TREPIDATION OF THE DRUIDS

SCREAMS round the Arch-druid's brow the
 sea-mew¹—white
 As Menai's foam; and toward the mystic
 ring
 Where Augurs stand, the Future ques-
 tioning,
 Slowly the cormorant aims her heavy
 flight,
 Portending ruin to each baleful rite⁵
 That, in the lapse of ages, hath crept o'er
 Diluvian truths, and patriarchal lore.
 Haughty the Bard: can these meek doc-
 trines blight

His transports? wither his heroic strains?
 But all shall be fulfilled;—the Julian spear
 A way first opened; and, with Roman
 chains,¹¹
 The tidings come of Jesus crucified;
 They come—they spread—the weak, the
 suffering, hear;
 Receive the faith, and in the hope abide.

IV

DRUIDICAL EXCOMMUNICATION

MERCY and Love have met thee on thy
 road,
 Thou wretched Outcast, from the gift of
 fire
 And food cut off by sacerdotal ire,
 From every sympathy that Man be-
 stowed!
 Yet shall it claim our reverence, that to
 God,⁵
 Ancient of days! that to the eternal Sire,
 These jealous Ministers of law aspire,
 As to the one sole fount whence wisdom
 flowed,
 Justice, and order. Tremblingly escaped,
 As if with prescience of the coming storm,
 That intimation when the stars were
 shaped;¹¹
 And still, 'mid yon thick woods, the
 primal truth
 Glimmers through many a superstitious
 form
 That fills the Soul with unavailing ruth.

V

UNCERTAINTY

DARKNESS surrounds us; seeking, we are
 lost
 On Snowdon's wilds, amid Brigantian
 coves,
 Or where the solitary shepherd roves
 Along the plain of Sarum, by the ghost
 Of Time and shadows of Tradition crost;

¹ This water-fowl was, among the Druids, an emblem of those traditions connected with the Deluge that made an important part of their mysteries. The Cormorant was a bird of bad omen.

And where the boatman of the Western
 Isles⁶

Slackens his course—to mark those holy
 piles
 Which yet survive on bleak Iona's coast.
 Nor these, nor monuments of eldest name,
 Nor Taliesin's unforgett'n lays,¹⁰
 Nor characters of Greek or Roman fame,
 To an unquestionable Source have led;
 Enough—if eyes, that sought the foun-
 tain-head
 In vain, upon the growing Rill may gaze.

VI

PERSECUTION

LAMENT! for Diocletian's fiery sword
 Works busy as the lightning; but instinct
 With malice ne'er to deadliest weapon
 linked,
 Which God's ethereal storehouses afford:
 Against the Followers of the incarnate
 Lord⁵
 It rages;—some are smitten in the field—
 Some pierced to the heart through the
 ineffectual shield
 Of sacred home;—with pomp are others
 gored
 And dreadful respite. Thus was Alban
 tried,
 England's first Martyr, whom no threats
 could shake;¹⁰
 Self-offered victim, for his friend he died,
 And for the faith; nor shall his name for-
 sake
 That Hill, whose flowery platform seems
 to rise
 By Nature decked for holiest sacrifice.³

VII

RECOVERY

As, when a storm hath ceased, the birds
 regain
 Their cheerfulness, and busily retrim
 Their nests, or chant a gratulating hymn
 To the blue ether and bespangled plain;
 Even so, in many a re-constructed fane,⁵
 Have the survivors of this Storm renewed
 Their holy rites with vocal gratitude:
 And solemn ceremonials they ordain
 To celebrate their great deliverance;
 Most feelingly instructed 'mid their
 fear—¹⁰
 That persecution, blind with rage ex-
 treme,
 May not the less, through Heaven's mild
 countenance,
 Even in her own despite, both feed and
 cheer;
 For all things are less dreadful than they
 seem.

⁶ See Note, p. 721.

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

VIII

TEMPTATIONS FROM ROMAN REFINEMENTS

WATCH, and be firm! for soul-subduing
vice,
Heart-killing luxury, on your steps await.
Fair houses, baths, and banquets delicate,
And temples flashing, bright as polar ice,
Their radiance through the woods—may
yet suffice 5
To sap your hardy virtue, and abate
Your love of Him upon whose forehead
sate
The crown of thorns; whose life-blood
flowed, the price
Of your redemption. Shun the insidious
arts
That Rome provides, less dreading from
her frown 10
Than from her wily praise, her peaceful
gown,
Language, and letters;—these, though
fondly viewed
As humanising graces, are but parts
And instruments of deadliest servitude!

IX

DISSENSIONS

THAT heresies should strike (if truth be
scanned
Presumptuously) their roots both wide
and deep,
Is natural as dreams to feverish sleep.
Lo! Discord at the altar dares to stand
Uplifting toward high Heaven her fiery
brand, 5
A cherished Priestess of the new-baptized!
But chastisement shall follow peace de-
spised.
The Pictish cloud darkens the enervate land
By Rome abandoned; vain are suppliant
cries,
And prayers that would undo her forced
farewell; 10
For she returns not.—Awed by her own
knell,
She casts the Britons upon strange Allies,
Soon to become more dreaded enemies
Than heartless misery called them to repel.

X

STRUGGLE OF THE BRITONS AGAINST THE BARBARIANS

Rise!—they *have* risen: of brave Aneurin
ask
How they have scourged old foes, per-
fidious friends:
The Spirit of Caractacus descends
Upon the Patriots, animates their task;—
Amazement runs before the towering
casque 5
Of Arthur, bearing through the stormy field
The virgin sculptured on his Christian
shield:—

Stretched in the sunny light of victory
bask

The Host that followed Urien as he strode
O'er heaps of slain;—from Cambrian
wood and moss 10
Druids descend, auxiliars of the Cross;
Bards, nursed on blue Plinlimmon's still
abode,
Rush on the fight, to harps preferring
swords,
And everlasting deeds to burning words!

XI

SAXON CONQUEST

NOR wants the cause the panic-striking aid
Of hallelujahs! tost from hill to hill—
For instant victory. But Heaven's high
will
Permits a second and a darker shade
Of Pagan night. Afflicted and dismayed,
The Relics of the sword flee to the moun-
tains: 6
O wretched Land! whose tears have
flowed like fountains;
Whose arts and honours in the dust are
laid
By men yet scarcely conscious of a care.
For other monuments than those of
Earth; 10
Who, as the fields and woods have given
them birth,
Will build their savage fortunes only
there;
Content, if foss, and barrow, and the girth
Of long-drawn rampart, witness what
they were.

XII

MONASTERY OF OLD BANGOR¹

THE oppression of the tumult—wrath and
scorn—
The tribulation—and the gleaming blades—
Such is the impetuous spirit that pervades
The song of Taliesin;—Ours shall mourn
The unarmed Host who by their prayers
would turn 5
The sword from Bangor's walls, and guard
the store
Of Aboriginal and Roman lore,
And Christian monuments, that now
must burn
To senseless ashes. Mark! how all things
swerve
From their known course, or vanish like
a dream; 10
Another language spreads from coast to
coast;
Only perchance some melancholy Stream
And some indignant Hills old names pre-
serve,
When laws, and creeds, and people all are
lost!

¹ See Note, p. 721.

² See Note, *ibid.*

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

XIII

CASUAL INCITEMENT

A BRIGHT-HAIRED company of youthful
slaves,
Beautiful strangers, stand within the pale
Of a sad market, ranged for public sale,
Where Tiber's stream the immortal City
laves:

ANGEL by name; and not an ANGEL waves
His wing who could seem lovelier to
man's eye 6

Than they appear to holy Gregory;
Who, having learnt that name, salvation
craves

For Them, and for their Land. The
earnest Sire,

His questions urging, feels, in slender ties
Of chiming sound, commanding sym-
pathies; 11

DE-IRIANS—he would save them from
God's IRE;

Subjects of Saxon ÆLLA—they shall sing
Glad HALLE-lujahs to the eternal King!

XIV

GLAD TIDINGS

FOR ever hallowed be this morning fair,
Blest be the unconscious shore on which
ye tread,

And blest the silver Cross, which ye, in-
stead

Of martial banner, in procession bear;
The Cross preceding Him who floats in
air, 5

The pictured Saviour!—By Augustin led,
They come—and onward travel without
dread,

Chanting in barbarous ears a tuneful
prayer—

Sung for themselves, and those whom
they would free!

Rich conquest waits them:—the tem-
pestuous sea 10

Of Ignorance, that ran so rough and high
And heeded not the voice of clashing
swords,

These good men humble by a few bare
words,

And calm with fear of God's divinity.

XV

PAULINUS¹

BUT to remote Northumbria's royal Hall,
Where thoughtful Edwin, tutored in the
school

Of sorrow, still maintains a heathen rule,
Who comes with functions apostolical?

Mark him, of shoulders curved, and sta-
ture tall, 5

¹ See Note, p. 722.

Black hair, and vivid eye, and meagre
cheek,

His prominent feature like an eagle's
beak;

A Man whose aspect doth at once appal
And strike with reverence. The Monarch
leans

Toward the pure truths this Delegate
propounds, 10

Repeatedly his own deep mind he sounds
With careful hesitation,—then convenes

A synod of his Councillors:—give ear,
And what a pensive Sage doth utter, hear!

XVI

PERSUASION

'MAN's life is like a Sparrow, mighty
King!

That—while at banquet with your Chiefs
you sit

Housed near a blazing fire—is seen to flit
Safe from the wintry tempest. Fluttering,

Here did it enter; there, on hasty wing, 5
Flies out, and passes on from cold to cold;

But whence it came we know not, nor be-
hold

Whither it goes. Even such, that tran-
sient Thing,

The human Soul; not utterly unknown
While in the Body lodged, her warm

abode; 10
But from what world She came, what woe

or weal
On her departure waits, no tongue hath

shown;
This mystery if the Stranger can reveal,
His be a welcome cordially bestowed!¹²

XVII

CONVERSION

PROMPT transformation works the novel
Lore;

The Council closed, the Priest in full
career

Rides forth, an armed man, and hurls a
spear

To desecrate the Fane which heretofore
He served in folly. Woden falls, and 5
Thor

Is overturned; the mace, in battle heaved
(So might they dream) till victory was

achieved,
Drops, and the God himself is seen no

more.
Temple and Altar sink, to hide their shame

Amid oblivious weeds. 'O come to me, 10
Ye heavy laden!' such the inviting voice

Heard near fresh streams;³ and thou-
sands, who rejoice

In the new Rite—the pledge of sanctity,
Shall, by regenerate life, the promise

claim.

¹ See Note, p. 722.

³ See Note, *ibid.*

ECCLESIASTICAL SÖNNETS

XVIII

APOLOGY

NOR scorn the aid which Fancy oft doth
lend
The Soul's eternal interests to promote:
Death, darkness, danger, are our natural
lot;
And evil Spirits *may* our walk attend
For aught the wisest know or compre-
hend;
Then be *good* Spirits free to breathe a note
Of elevation; let their odours float
Around these Converts; and their glories
blend,
The midnight stars outshining, or the
blaze
Of the noon-day. Nor doubt that golden
cords
Of good works, mingling with the visions,
raise
The Soul to purer worlds: and *who* the line
Shall draw, the limits of the power define,
That even imperfect faith to man affords?

XIX

PRIMITIVE SAXON CLERGY¹

How beautiful your presence, how be-
nign,
Servants of God! who not a thought will
share
With the vain world; who, outwardly as
bare
As winter trees, yield no fallacious sign
That the firm soul is clothed with fruit
divine!
Such Priest, when service worthy of his
care
Has called him forth to breathe the com-
mon air,
Might seem a saintly Image from its shrine
Descended:—happy are the eyes that
meet
The Apparition; evil thoughts are stayed
At his approach, and low-bowed necks
entreat
A benediction from his voice or hand;
Whence grace, through which the heart
can understand,
And vows, that bind the will, in silence
made.

XX

OTHER INFLUENCES

AH, when the Body, round which in love
we clung,
Is chilled by death, does mutual service
fail?
Is tender pity then of no avail?
Are intercessions of the fervent tongue
A waste of hope?—From this sad source
have sprung

¹ See Note, p. 722.

Rites that console the Spirit, under grief
Which ill can brook more rational relief:
Hence, prayers are shaped amiss, and
dirges sung
For Souls whose doom is fixed! The way
is smooth
For Power that travels with the human
heart:
Confession ministers the pang to soothe
In him who at the ghost of guilt doth start.
Ye holy Men, so earnest in your care,
Of your own mighty instruments beware!

XXI

SECLUSION

LANCE, shield, and sword relinquished—
at his side
A bead-roll, in his hand a clasped book,
Or staff more harmless than a shepherd's
crook,
The war-worn Chieftain quits the world—
to hide
His thin autumnal locks where Monks
abide
In cloistered privacy. But not to dwell
In soft repose he comes. Within his cell,
Round the decaying trunk of human pride,
At morn, and eve, and midnight's silent
hour,
Do penitential cogitations cling;
Like ivy, round some ancient elm, they
twine
In grisly folds and strictures serpentine;
Yet, while they strangle, a fair growth
they bring,
For recompense—their own perennial
bower.

XXII

CONTINUED

METHINKS that to some vacant hermitage
My feet would rather turn—to some dry
nook
Scooped out of living rock, and near a
brook
Hurled down a mountain-cove from stage
to stage,
Yet tempering, for my sight, its bustling
rage
In the soft heaven of a translucent pool;
Thence creeping under sylvan arches cool,
Fit haunt of shapes whose glorious equi-
page
Would elevate my dreams. A beechen
bowl,
A maple dish, my furniture should be;
Crisp, yellow leaves my bed; the hooting
owl
My night-watch: nor should e'er the
crested fowl
From thorp or vill his matins sound for
me,
Tired of the world and all its industry.

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

XXIII

REPROOF

BUT what if One, through grove or flowery mead,
Indulging thus at will the creeping feet
Of a voluptuous indolence, should meet
Thy hovering Shade, O venerable Bede!
The saint, the scholar, from a circle freed
Of toil stupendous, in a hallowed seat
Of learning, where thou heard'st the billows beat

On a wild coast, rough monitors to feed
Perpetual industry. Sublime Recluse!
The recreant soul, that dares to shun the debt
Imposed on human kind, must first forget
Thy diligence, thy unrelaxing use
Of a long life; and, in the hour of death,
The last dear service of thy passing breath!¹

XXIV

SAXON MONASTERIES, AND LIGHTS AND SHADES OF THE RELIGION

BY such examples moved to unbought pains,
The people work like congregated bees;
Eager to build the quiet Fortresses
Where Piety, as they believe, obtains
From Heaven a general blessing; timely rains
Or needful sunshine; prosperous enterprise,
Justice and peace:—bold faith! yet also rise
The sacred Structures for less doubtful gains.
The Sensual think with reverence of the palms
Which the chaste Votaries seek, beyond the grave;
If penance be redeemable, thence alms
Flow to the poor, and freedom to the slave;
And if full oft the Sanctuary save
Lives black with guilt, ferocity it calms.

XXV

MISSIONS AND TRAVELS

NOT sedentary all: there are who roam
To scatter seeds of life on barbarous shores;
Or quit with zealous step their knee-worn floors
To seek the general mart of Christendom;
Whence they, like richly-laden merchants, come
To their beloved cells:—or shall we say
That, like the Red-cross Knight, they urge their way,
To lead in memorable triumph home
Truth, their immortal Una? Babylon,

¹ He expired dictating the last words of a translation of St. John's Gospel.

Learned and wise, hath perished utterly,
Nor leaves her Speech one word to aid
the sigh
That would lament her;—Memphis, Tyre,¹¹
are gone
With all their Arts,—but classic lore
glides on
By these Religious saved for all posterity.

XXVI

ALFRED

BEHOLD a pupil of the monkish gown,
The pious ALFRED, King to Justice dear!
Lord of the harp and liberating spear;
Mirror of Princes! Indigent Renown
Might range the starry ether for a crown
Equal to his deserts, who, like the year,
Pours forth his bounty, like the day doth cheer,
And awes like night with mercy-tempered frown.
Ease from this noble miser of his time
No moment steals; pain narrows not his cares.²
Though small his kingdom as a spark or gem,
Of Alfred boasts remote Jerusalem,
And Christian India, through her wide-spread clime,
In sacred converse gifts with Alfred shares.

XXVII

HIS DESCENDANTS

WHEN thy great soul was freed from mortal chains,
Darling of England! many a bitter shower
Fell on thy tomb; but emulative power
Flowed in thy line through undegenerate veins.
The Race of Alfred covet glorious pains
When dangers threaten, dangers ever new!
Black tempests bursting, blacker still in view!
But manly sovereignty its hold retains;
The root sincere, the branches bold to strive
With the fierce tempest, while, within the round
Of their protection, gentle virtues thrive;
As oft, mid some green plot of open ground,
Wide as the oak extends its dewy gloom,
The fostered hyacinths spread their purple bloom.

XXVIII

INFLUENCE ABUSED

URGED by Ambition, who with subtlest skill
Changes her means, the Enthusiast as a dupe
Shall soar, and as a hypocrite can stoop,

² See Note, p. 722.

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

XXXI

THE NORMAN CONQUEST

And turn the instruments of good to ill,
Moulding the credulous people to his will.
Such DUNSTAN:—from its Benedictine
coop
Issues the master Mind, at whose fell swoop
The chaste affections tremble to fulfil
Their purposes. Behold, pre-signified,
The Might of spiritual sway! his thoughts,
his dreams, 10
Do in the supernatural world abide:
So vaunt a throng of Followers, filled
with pride
In what they see of virtues pushed to
extremes,
And sorceries of talent misapplied.

THE woman-hearted Confessor prepares
The evanescence of the Saxon line.
Hark! 'tis the tolling Curfew!—the stars
shine;
But of the lights that cherish household
cares
And festive gladness, burns not one that
dares 5
To twinkle after that dull stroke of thine,
Emblem and instrument, from Thames to
Tyne,
Of force that daunts, and cunning that
ensnares!
Yet as the terrors of the lordly bell,
That quench, from hut to palace, lamps
and fires, 10
Touch not the tapers of the sacred quires;
Even so a thralldom, studious to expel
Old laws, and ancient customs to derange,
To Creed or Ritual brings no fatal change.

XXIX

DANISH CONQUESTS

WOE to the Crown that doth the Cowl
obey! 1
Dissension, checking arms that would
restrain
The incessant Rovers of the northern main,
Helps to restore and spread a Pagan sway:
But Gospel-truth is potent to allay 5
Fierceness and rage; and soon the cruel
Dane
Feels, through the influence of her gentle
reign,
His native superstitions melt away.
Thus often, when thick gloom the east
o'ershrouds,
The full-orbed Moon, slow-climbing, doth
appear 10
Silently to consume the heavy clouds;
How no one can resolve; but every eye
Around her sees, while air is hushed, a clear
And widening circuit of ethereal sky.

XXX

CANUTE

A PLEASANT music floats along the Mere,
From Monks in Ely chanting service high,
While-as Canute the King is rowing by,
'My Oarsmen,' quoth the mighty King,
'draw near,
That we the sweet song of the Monks
may hear!' 5
He listens (all past conquests and all
schemes
Of future vanishing like empty dreams)
Heart-touched, and haply not without a
tear.
The Royal Minstrel, ere the choir is still,
While his free Barge skims the smooth
flood along, 10
Gives to that rapture an accordant
Rhyme.²
O suffering Earth! be thankful; sternest
clime
And rudest age are subject to the thrill
Of heaven-descended Piety and Song.

¹ See Note, p. 722.

² Which is still extant.

XXXII

[Composed (?),—Published 1837.]

COLDLY we spake. The Saxons, over-
powered
By wrong triumphant through its own
excess,
From fields laid waste, from house and
home devoured
By flames, look up to heaven and crave
redress
From God's eternal justice. Pitiless 5
Though men be, there are angels that can
feel
For wounds that death alone has power
to heal,
For penitent guilt, and innocent distress.
And has a Champion risen in arms to try
His Country's virtue, fought, and breathes
no more; 10
Him in their hearts the people canonize;
And far above the mine's most precious
ore
The least small pittance of bare mould
they prize
Scooped from the sacred earth where his
dear relics lie.

XXXIII

THE COUNCIL OF CLERMONT

'AND shall,' the Pontiff asks, 'profane-
ness flow
From Nazareth—source of Christian
piety,
From Bethlehem, from the Mounts of
Agony
And glorified Ascension? Warriors, go,
With prayers and blessings we your path
will sow; 5

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

Like Moses hold our hands erect, till ye
Have chased far off by righteous victory
These sons of Amalek, or laid them
low!—

'GOD WILLETH IT,' the whole assembly
cry;

Shout which the enraptured multitude
astounds!

The Council-roof and Clermont's towers
reply;—

'God willeth it,' from hill to hill rebounds,
And, in awe-stricken Countries far and
nigh,

Through 'Nature's hollow arch' that
voice resounds.¹

XXXIV

CRUSADES

THE turbaned Race are poured in thicken-
ing swarms

Along the west; though driven from
Aquitaine,

The Crescent glitters on the towers of
Spain;

And soft Italia feels renewed alarms;
The scimitar, that yields not to the
charms

Of ease, the narrow Bosphorus will dis-
dain;

Nor long (that crossed) would Grecian
hills detain

Their tents, and check the current of
their arms.

Then blame not those who, by the
mightiest lever

Known to the moral world, Imagination,
Upheave, so seems it, from her natural
station

All Christendom:—they sweep along (was
never

So huge a host!)—to tear from the
Unbeliever

The precious Tomb, their haven of salva-
tion.

XXXV

RICHARD I

REDOUBTED King, of courage leonine,
I mark thee, Richard! urgent to equip

Thy warlike person with the staff and
scip;

I watch thee sailing o'er the midland
brine;

In conquered Cyprus see thy Bride
decline

Her blushing cheek, love-vows upon her lip,
And see love-emblems streaming from thy
ship,

As thence she holds her way to Palestine.
My Song, a fearless homager, would
attend

¹ The decision of this council was believed to be
instantly known in remote parts of Europe.

Thy thundering battle-axe as it cleaves
the press

Of war, but duty summons her away
To tell—how, finding in the rash distress

Of those Enthusiasts a subservient friend,
To giddier heights hath clomb the Papal
sway.

XXXVI

AN INTERDICT

REALMS quake by turns: proud Arbitress
of grace,

The Church, by mandate shadowing forth
the power

She arrogates o'er heaven's eternal door,
Closes the gates of every sacred place.

Straight from the sun and tainted air's
embrace

All sacred things are covered: cheerful
morn

Grows sad as night—no seemly garb is
worn,

Nor is a face allowed to meet a face
With natural smiles of greeting. Bells

are dumb;
Ditches are graves—funereal rites denied;

And in the churchyard he must take his
bride

Who dares be wedded! Fancies thickly
come

Into the pensive heart ill fortified,
And comfortless despairs the soul be-
numb.

XXXVII

PAPAL ABUSES

As with the Stream our voyage we pursue,
The gross materials of this world present

A marvellous study of wild accident;
Uncouth proximities of old and new;

And bold transfigurations, more untrue
(As might be deemed) to disciplined intent

Than aught the sky's fantastic element,
When most fantastic, offers to the view.

Saw we not Henry scourged at Becket's
Shrine?

Lo! John self-stripped of his insignia:—
crown,

Sceptre and mantle, sword and ring, laid
down

At a proud Legate's feet! The spears that
line

Baronial halls the opprobrious insult feel;
And angry Ocean roars a vain appeal.

XXXVIII

SCENE IN VENICE

BLACK Demons hovering o'er his mitred
head,

To Caesar's Successor the Pontiff spake;
'Ere I absolve thee, stoop! that on thy neck

Levelled with earth this foot of mine may
tread.'

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

Then he, who to the altar had been led,
 He, whose strong arm the Orient could
 not check,
 He, who had held the Soldan at his beck,
 Stooped, of all glory disinherited,
 And even the common dignity of man!—
 Amazement strikes the crowd: while
 many turn
 Their eyes away in sorrow, others burn
 With scorn, invoking a vindictive ban
 From outraged Nature; but the sense of
 most
 In abject sympathy with power is lost.

XXXIX

PAPAL DOMINION

UNLESS to Peter's Chair the viewless wind
 Must come and ask permission when to
 blow,
 What further empire would it have?
 for now
 A ghostly Domination, unconfined
 As that by dreaming Bards to Love
 assigned,
 Sits there in sober truth—to raise the low,
 Perplex the wise, the strong to over-
 throw;
 Through earth and heaven to bind and to
 unbind!—
 Resist—the thunder quails thee!—crouch
 —rebuff
 Shall be thy recompense! from land to
 land
 The ancient thrones of Christendom are
 stuff
 For occupation of a magic wand,
 And 'tis the Pope that wields it:—whether
 rough
 Or smooth his front, our world is in his
 hand!

PART II

TO THE CLOSE OF THE TROUBLES IN THE REIGN OF CHARLES I

I

[Composed (?).—Published 1845.]

How soon—alas! did Man, created pure—
 By Angels guarded, deviate from the line
 Prescribed to duty:—woeful forfeiture
 He made by wilful breach of law divine.
 With like perverseness did the Church
 abjure
 Obedience to her Lord, and haste to
 twine,
 'Mid Heaven-born flowers that shall for
 aye endure,
 Weeds on whose front the world had
 fixed her sign.
 O Man,—if with thy trials thus it fares,
 If good can smooth the way to evil choice,
 From all rash censure be the mind kept
 free;

He only judges right who weighs, com-
 pares,
 And, in the sternest sentence which his
 voice
 Pronounces, ne'er abandons Charity.

II

[Composed (?).—Published 1845.]

FROM false assumption rose, and fondly
 hailed
 By superstition, spread the Papal power;
 Yet do not deem the Autocracy prevailed
 Thus only, even in error's darkest hour.
 She daunts, forth-thundering from her
 spiritual tower
 Brute rapine, or with gentle lure she tames.
 Justice and Peace through Her uphold
 their claims;
 And Chastity finds many a sheltering
 bower.
 Realm there is none that if controlled or
 sway'd
 By her commands partakes not, in degree,
 Of good, o'er manners arts and arms,
 diffused:
 Yes, to thy domination, Roman See,
 Tho' miserably, oft monstrously, abused
 By blind ambition, be this tribute paid.

III

CISTERTIAN MONASTERY

'HERE Man more purely lives, less oft
 doth fall,
 More promptly rises, walks with stricter
 heed,
 More safely rests, dies happier, is freed
 Earlier from cleansing fires, and gains
 withal
 A brighter crown.'—On yon Cistercian wall
 That confident assurance may be read; 6
 And, to like shelter, from the world have
 fled
 Increasing multitudes. The potent call
 Doubtless shall cheat full oft the heart's
 desires;
 Yet, while the rugged Age on pliant knee
 Vows to rapt Fancy humble fealty, 11
 A gentler life spreads round the holy
 spires;
 Where'er they rise, the sylvan waste
 retires,
 And aery harvests crown the fertile lea.

IV

[Composed (?).—Published 1835.]

DEPLORABLE his lot who tills the ground,
 His whole life long tills it, with heartless
 toil
 Of villain-service, passing with the soil
 To each new Master, like a steer or hound,
 Or like a rooted tree, or stone earth-
 bound;

¹ See Note, p. 722.

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

But mark how gladly, through their own domains,
The Monks relax or break these iron chains;
While Mercy, uttering, through their voice, a sound
Echoed in Heaven, cries out, 'Ye Chiefs, abate
These legalized oppressions! Man—whose name
And nature God disdained not; Man—whose soul
Christ died for—cannot forfeit his high claim
To live and move exempt from all control
Which fellow-feeling doth not mitigate!'

V

MONKS AND SCHOOLMEN

RECORD we too, with just and faithful pen,
That many hooded Cenobites there are,
Who in their private cells have yet a care
Of public quiet; unambitious Men,
Counsellors for the world, of piercing ken;
Whose fervent exhortations from afar
Move Princes to their duty, peace or war;
And oft-times in the most forbidding den
Of solitude, with love of science strong,
How patiently the yoke of thought they bear!
How subtly glide its finest threads along!
Spirits that crowd the intellectual sphere
With mazy boundaries, as the astronomer
With orb and cycle girds the starry throng.

VI

OTHER BENEFITS

AND, not in vain embodied to the sight,
Religion finds even in the stern retreat
Of feudal sway her own appropriate seat;
From the collegiate pomps on Windsor's height
Down to the humbler altar, which the Knight
And his Retainers of the embattled hall
Seek in domestic oratory small,
For prayer in stillness, or the chanted rite;
Then chiefly dear, when foes are planted round,
Who teach the intrepid guardians of the place—
Hourly exposed to death, with famine worn,
And suffering under many a perilous wound—
How sad would be their durance, if forlorn
Of offices dispensing heavenly grace!

VII

CONTINUED

AND what melodious sounds at times prevail!
And, ever and anon, how bright a gleam
Pours on the surface of the turbid Stream!

What heartfelt fragrance mingles with the gale
That swells the bosom of our passing sail!
For where, but on *this* River's margin, blow
Those flowers of chivalry, to bind the brow
Of hardihood with wreaths that shall not fail?—
Fair Court of Edward! wonder of the world!
I see a matchless blazonry unfurled
Of wisdom, magnanimity, and love;
And meekness tempering honourable pride;
The lamb is couching by the lion's side,
And near the flame-eyed eagle sits the dove.

VIII

CRUSADERS

FURL we the sails, and pass with tardy oars
Through these bright regions, casting many a glance
Upon the dream-like issues—the romance
Of many-coloured life that Fortune pours
Round the Crusaders, till on distant shores
Their labours end; or they return to lie,
The vow performed, in cross-legged effigy,
Devoutly stretched upon their chancel floors.
Am I deceived? Or is their requiem chanted
By voices never mute when Heaven unites
Her inmost, softest, tenderest harmonies;
Requiem which Earth takes up with voice undaunted,
When she would tell how Brave, and Good, and Wise,
For their high guerdon not in vain have panted!

IX

[Composed 1842.—Published 1845.]

As faith thus sanctified the warrior's crest
While from the Papal Unity there came,
What feebleness means had failed to give, one aim
Diffused thro' all the regions of the West;
So does her Unity its power attest
By works of Art, that shed, on the outward frame
Of worship, glory and grace, which who shall blame
That ever looked to heaven for final rest?
Hail countless Temples! that so well befit
Your ministry; that, as ye rise and take
Form spirit and character from holy writ,
Give to devotion, wheresoe'er awake, 12
Pinions of high and higher sweep, and make
The unconverted soul with awe submit.

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

X

[Composed 1842.—Published 1845.]

WHERE long and deeply hath been fixed
the root
In the blest soil of gospel truth, the Tree,
(Blighted or scathed tho' many branches
be,
Put forth to wither, many a hopeful shoot)
Can never cease to bear celestial fruit. 5
Witness the Church that oft-times, with
effect
Dear to the saints, strives earnestly to
eject
Her bane, her vital energies recruit.
Lamenting, do not hopelessly repine
When such good work is doomed to be
undone, 10
The conquests lost that were so hardly
won:—
All promises vouchsafed by Heaven will
shine
In light confirmed while years their course
shall run,
Confirmed alike in progress and decline.

XI

TRANSUBSTANTIATION

ENOUGH! for see, with dim association
The tapers burn; the odorous incense feeds
A greedy flame; the pompous mass pro-
ceeds;
The Priest bestows the appointed conse-
cration; 4
And, while the Host is raised, its elevation
An awe and supernatural horror breeds;
And all the people bow their heads, like
reeds
To a soft breeze, in lowly adoration.
This Valdo brooks not. On the banks of
Rhone
He taught, till persecution chased him
thence, 10
To adore the Invisible, and Him alone.
Nor are his Followers loth to seek defence,
'Mid woods and wilds, on Nature's craggy
throne,
From rites that trample upon soul and
sense.

XII

THE VAUDOIS

[Composed (?).—Published 1835.]

BUT whence came they who for the
Saviour Lord
Have long borne witness as the Scriptures
teach?—
Ages ere Valdo raised his voice to preach
In Gallic ears the unadulterate Word,
Their fugitive Progenitors explored 5
Subalpine vales, in quest of safe retreats
Where that pure Church survives, though
summer heats
Open a passage to the Romish sword,
Far as it dares to follow. Herbs self-sown,

And fruitage gathered from the chestnut-
wood, 10
Nourish the sufferers then; and mists,
that brood
O'er chasms with new-fallen obstacles
bestrown,
Protect them; and the eternal snow that
daunts
Aliens, is God's good winter for their
haunts.

XIII

[Composed (?).—Published 1835.]

PAISED be the Rivers, from their moun-
tain springs
Shouting to Freedom, 'Plant thy banners
here!'
To harassd Piety, 'Dismiss thy fear,
And in our caverns smooth thy ruffled
wings!'
Nor be unthanked their final lingerings—
Silent, but not to high-souled Passion's 6
ear—
'Mid reedy fens wide-spread and marshes
drear,
Their own creation. Such glad wel-
comings
As Po was heard to give where Venice
rose
Hailed from aloft those Heirs of truth
divine 10
Who near his fountains sought obscure
repose,
Yet came prepared as glorious lights to
shine,
Should that be needed for their sacred
Charge;
Blest Prisoners They, whose spirits were
at large!

XIV

WALDENSES

THOSE had given earliest notice, as the
lark
Springs from the ground the morn to
gratulate;
Or rather rose the day to antedate,
By striking out a solitary spark,
When all the world with midnight gloom 5
was dark.—
Then followed the Waldensian bands,
whom Hate
In vain endeavours to exterminate,
Whom Obloquy pursues with hideous
bark: 1
But they desist not;—and the sacred fire,
Rekindled thus, from dens and savage
woods 10
Moves, handed on with never-ceasing care,
Through courts, through camps, o'er
limitary floods;
Nor lacks this sea-girt Isle a timely share
Of the new Flame, not suffered to expire.

1 See Note, p. 722.

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

XV

ARCHBISHOP CHICHELEY TO HENRY V

'What beast in wilderness or cultured
field
The lively beauty of the leopard shows?
What flower in meadow-ground or garden
grows
That to the towering lily doth not yield?
Let both meet only on thy royal shield! 5
Go forth, great King! claim what thy
birth bestows;
Conquer the Gallic lily which thy foes
Dare to usurp;—thou hast a sword to
wield,
And Heaven will crown the right.'—The
mitred Sire
Thus spake—and lo! a Fleet, for Gaul
address, 10
Ploughs her bold course across the won-
dering seas;
For, sooth to say, ambition, in the breast
Of youthful heroes, is no sullen fire,
But one that leaps to meet the fanning
breeze.

XVI

WARS OF YORK AND LANCASTER

THUS is the storm abated by the craft
Of a shrewd Counsellor, eager to protect
The Church, whose power hath recently
been checked,
Whose monstrous riches threatened. So
the shaft
Of victory mounts high, and blood is
quaffed 5
In fields that rival Cressy and Poitiers—
Pride to be washed away by bitter tears!
For deep as hell itself, the avenging
draught
Of civil slaughter. Yet, while temporal
power
Is by these shocks exhausted, spiritual
truth 10
Maintains the else endangered gift of life;
Proceeds from infancy to lusty youth;
And, under cover of this woeful strife,
Gathers unblighted strength from hour
to hour.

XVII

WICLIFFE

ONCE more the Church is seized with
sudden fear,
And at her call is Wicliffe disinhumed:
Yea, his dry bones to ashes are consumed
And flung into the brook that travels
near;
Forthwith that ancient Voice which
Streams can hear 5
Thus speaks (that Voice which walks upon
the wind,

Though seldom heard by busy human
kind)—
'As thou these ashes, little Brook! wilt
bear
Into the Avon, Avon to the tide
Of Severn, Severn to the narrow seas, 10
Into main Ocean they, this deed accurst
An emblem yields to friends and enemies
How the bold Teacher's Doctrine, sancti-
fied
By truth, shall spread, throughout the
world dispersed.'

XVIII

CORRUPTIONS OF THE HIGHER CLERGY

'Woe to you, Prelates! rioting in ease
And cumbrous wealth—the shame of your
estate;
You, on whose progress dazzling trains
await
Of pompous horses; whom vain titles
please;
Who will be served by others on their
knees, 5
Yet will yourselves to God no service
pay;
Pastors who neither take nor point the
way
To Heaven; for, either lost in vanities
Ye have no skill to teach, or if ye know
And speak the word ———' Alas! of
fearful things 10
'Tis the most fearful when the people's
eye
Abuse hath cleared from vain imaginings;
And taught the general voice to prophesy
Of Justice armed, and Pride to be laid
low.

XIX

ABUSE OF MONASTIC POWER

AND what is Penance with her knotted
thong;
Mortification with the shirt of hair,
Wan cheek, and knees indurated with
prayer,
Vigils, and fastings rigorous as long;
If cloistered Avarice scruple not to wrong
The pious, humble, useful Secular, 6
And rob the people of his daily care,
Scorning that world whose blindness
makes her strong?
Inversion strange! that, unto One who
lives
For self, and struggles with himself alone,
The amplest share of heavenly favour
gives; 11
That to a Monk allots, both in the esteem
Of God and man, place higher than to him
Who on the good of others builds his
own!

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

XX

MONASTIC VOLUPTUOUSNESS

YET more,—round many a Convent's
blazing fire
Unhallowed threads of revelry are spun;
There Venus sits disguised like a Nun,—
While Bacchus, clothed in semblance of
a Friar,
Pours out his choicest beverage high and
higher
Sparkling, until it cannot choose but run
Over the bowl, whose silver lip hath won
An instant kiss of masterful desire—
To stay the precious waste. Through
every brain
The domination of the sprightly juice 10
Spreads high conceits to madding Fancy
dear,
Till the arched roof, with resolute abuse
Of its grave echoes, swells a choral strain
Whose votive burthen is—'OUR KING-
DOM'S HERE!'

XXI

DISSOLUTION OF THE MONASTERIES

THREATS come which no submission may
assuage,
No sacrifice avert, no power dispute;
The tapers shall be quenched, the belfries
mute,
And, 'mid their choirs unroofed by selfish
rage,
The warbling wren shall find a leafy cage;
The gadding bramble hang her purple
fruit;
And the green lizard and the gilded newt
Lead unmolested lives, and die of age.
The owl of evening and the woodland fox
For their abode the shrines of Waltham
choose: 10
Proud Glastonbury can no more refuse
To stoop her head before these desperate
shocks—
She whose high pomp displaced, as story
tells,
Arimathean Joseph's wattled cells.

XXII

THE SAME SUBJECT

THE lovely Nun (submissive, but more
meek
Through saintly habit than from effort
due
To unrelenting mandates that pursue
With equal wrath the steps of strong and
weak)
Goes forth—unveiling timidly a cheek 5
Suffused with blushes of celestial hue,
While through the Convent's gate to open
view
Softly she glides, another home to seek.
Not Iris, issuing from her cloudy shrine,

An Apparition more divinely bright! 10
Not more attractive to the dazzled sight
Those watery glories, on the stormy brine
Poured forth, while summer suns at dis-
tance shine,
And the green vales lie hushed in sober
light!

XXIII

CONTINUED

YET many a Novice of the cloistral shade,
And many chained by vows, with eager
glee
The warrant hail, exulting to be free;
Like ships before whose keels, full long
embayed
In polar ice, propitious winds have made
Unlooked-for outlet to an open sea, 6
Their liquid world, for bold discovery,
In all her quarters temptingly displayed!
Hope guides the young; but when the old
must pass
The threshold, whither shall they turn to
find 10
The hospitality—the alms (alas!
Alms may be needed) which that House
bestowed?
Can they, in faith and worship, train the
mind
To keep this new and questionable road?

XXIV

SAINTS

YE, too, must fly before a chasing hand,
Angels and Saints, in every hamlet
mourned!
Ah! if the old idolatry be spurned,
Let not your radiant Shapes desert the
Land:
Her adoration was not your demand, 5
The fond heart proffered it—the servile
heart;
And therefore are ye summoned to de-
part,
Michael, and thou, St. George, whose
flaming brand
The Dragon quelled; and valiant Mar-
garet 9
Whose rival sword a like Opponent slew:
And rapt Cecilia, seraph-haunted Queen
Of harmony; and weeping Magdalene,
Who in the penitential desert met
Gales sweet as those that over Eden blew!

XXV

THE VIRGIN

MOTHER! whose virgin bosom was un-
crossed
With the least shade of thought to sin
allied;
Woman! above all women glorified,
Our tainted nature's solitary boast;
Purer than foam on central ocean tost; 5

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

Brighter than eastern skies at daybreak
 strewn
 With fancied roses, than the unblemished
 moon
 Before her wane begins on heaven's blue
 coast;
 Thy Image falls to earth. Yet some, I
 ween,
 Not unforgiven the suppliant knee might
 bend,
 As to a visible Power, in which did blend
 All that was mixed and reconciled in
 Thee
 Of mother's love with maiden purity,
 Of high with low, celestial with terrene!

XXVI

APOLOGY

NOT utterly unworthy to endure
 Was the supremacy of crafty Rome;
 Age after age to the arch of Christendom
 Aerial keystone haughtily secure;
 Supremacy from Heaven transmitted
 pure,
 As many hold; and, therefore, to the tomb
 Pass, some through fire—and by the scaffold
 fold some—
 Like saintly Fisher, and unbending More.
 'Lightly for both the bosom's lord did sit
 Upon his throne;' unsoftened, undis-
 mayed
 By aught that mingled with the tragic
 scene
 Of pity or fear; and More's gay genius
 played
 With the inoffensive sword of native wit,
 Than the bare axe more luminous and
 keen.

XXVII

IMAGINATIVE REGRETS

DEEP is the lamentation! Not alone
 From Sages justly honoured by mankind;
 But from the ghostly tenants of the wind,
 Demons and Spirits, many a dolorous
 groan
 Issues for that dominion overthrown: 5
 Proud Tiber grieves, and far-off Ganges,
 blind
 As his own worshippers: and Nile, re-
 clined
 Upon his monstrous urn, the farewell moan
 Renews. Through every forest, cave, and
 den,
 Where frauds were hatched of old, hath
 sorrow past—
 Hangs o'er the Arabian Prophet's native
 Waste,
 Where once his airy helpers schemed and
 planned
 'Mid spectral lakes bemoaning thirsty
 men,
 And stalking pillars built of fiery sand.

XXVIII

REFLECTIONS

GRANT that by this unsparing hurricane
 Green leaves with yellow mixed are torn
 away,
 And goodly fruitage with the mother-
 spray;
 'Twere madness—wished we, therefore, to
 detain,
 With hands stretched forth in mollified
 disdain,
 The 'trumpety' that ascends in bare dis-
 play—
 Bulls, pardons, relics, cowls black, white,
 and grey—
 Upwhirled, and flying o'er the ethereal
 plain
 Fast bound for Limbo Lake. And yet
 not choice
 But habit rules the unreflecting herd, 10
 And airy bonds are hardest to disown;
 Hence, with the spiritual sovereignty
 transferred
 Unto itself, the Crown assumes a voice
 Of reckless mastery, hitherto unknown.

XXIX

TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE

BUT, to outweigh all harm, the sacred
 Book,
 In dusty sequestration wrapt too long,
 Assumes the accents of our native tongue;
 And he who guides the plough, or wields
 the crook,
 With understanding spirit now may look
 Upon her records, listen to her song, 6
 And sift her laws—much wondering that
 the wrong,
 Which Faith has suffered, Heaven could
 calmly brook.
 Transcendent Boon! noblest that earthly
 King
 Ever bestowed to equalize and bless 10
 Under the weight of mortal wretched-
 ness!
 But passions spread like plagues, and
 thousands wild
 With bigotry shall tread the Offering
 Beneath their feet, detested and defiled.

XXX

THE POINT AT ISSUE

[Composed (?).—Published 1827.]

FOR what contend the wise?—for no-
 thing less
 Than that the Soul, freed from the bonds
 of Sense,
 And to her God restored by evidence
 Of things not seen, drawn forth from
 their recess,
 Root there, and not in forms, her holi-
 ness;— 5

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

XXXIII

REVIVAL OF POPERY

[Composed (?).—Published 1827.]

For Faith, which to the Patriarchs did
dispense
Sure guidance, ere a ceremonial fence
Was needful round men thirsting to trans-
gress;—
For Faith, more perfect still, with which
the Lord
Of all, himself a Spirit, in the youth 10
Of Christian aspiration, deigned to fill
The temples of their hearts who, with his
word
Informed, were resolute to do his will,
And worship him in spirit and in truth.

XXXI

EDWARD VI

'SWEET is the holiness of Youth'—so felt
Time-honoured Chaucerspeakingthrough
that Lay
By which the Prioress beguiled the way,
And many a Pilgrim's rugged heart did
melt.
Hadst thou, loved Bard! whose spirit
often dwelt 5
In the clear land of vision, but foreseen
King, child, and seraph, blended in the
mien
Of pious Edward kneeling as he knelt
In meek and simple infancy, what joy
For universal Christendom had thrilled
Thy heart! what hopes inspired thy genius,
skilled, 11
(O great Precursor, genuine morning Star)
The lucid shafts of reason to employ,
Piercing the Papal darkness from afar!

XXXII

EDWARD SIGNING THE WARRANT FOR THE EXECUTION OF JOAN OF KENT

THE tears of man in various measure gush
From various sources; gently overflow
From blissful transport some—from clefts
of woe
Some with ungovernable impulse rush;
And some, coeval with the earliest blush
Of infant passion, scarcely dare to show 6
Their pearly lustre—coming but to go;
And some break forth when others' sor-
rows crush
The sympathising heart. Nor these, nor
yet
The noblest drops to admiration known,
To gratitude, to injuries forgiven— 11
Claim Heaven's regard like waters that
have wet
The innocent eyes of youthful Monarchs
driven
To pen the mandates nature doth disown.

THE saintly Youth has ceased to rule,
discrowned
By unrelenting Death. O People keen
For change, to whom the new looks al-
ways green!
Rejoicing did they cast upon the ground
Their Gods of wood and stone; and, at
the sound 5
Of counter-proclamation, now are seen,
(Proud triumph is it for a sullen Queen!)
Lifting them up, the worship to confound
Of the Most High. Again do they invoke
The Creature, to the Creature glory
give; 10
Again with frankincense the altars smoke
Like those the Heathen served; and mass
is sung;
And prayer, man's rational prerogative,
Runs through blind channels of an un-
known tongue.

XXXIV

LATIMER AND RIDLEY

[Composed (?).—Published 1827.]

How fast the Marian death-list is un-
rolled!
See Latimer and Ridley in the might
Of Faith stand coupled for a common
flight!
One (like those prophets whom God sent
of old)
Transfigured,¹ from this kindling hath
foretold 5
A torch of inextinguishable light;
The Other gains a confidence as bold;
And thus they foil their enemy's despise.
The penal instruments, the shows of
crime,
Are glorified while this once-mitred pair
Of saintly Friends the 'murderer's chain
partake, 11
Corded, and burning at the social stake.'
Earth never witnessed object more sub-
lime
In constancy, in fellowship more fair!

XXXV

CRANMER

OUTSTRETCHING flameward his upbraided
hand
(O God of mercy, may no earthly Seat
Of judgment such presumptuous doom
repeat!)
Amid the shuddering throng doth Cran-
mer stand;
Firm as the stake to which with iron
band 5

¹ See Note, p. 722.

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

His frame is tied; firm from the naked feet
To the bare head. The victory is complete;
The shrouded Body to the Soul's command

Answers with more than Indian fortitude,
Through all her nerves with finer sense
endued,¹⁰

Till breath departs in blissful aspiration:
Then, 'mid the ghastly ruins of the fire,
Behold the unalterable heart entire,
Emblem of faith untouched, miraculous
attestation!¹

XXXVI

GENERAL VIEW OF THE TROUBLES OF THE
REFORMATION

AID, glorious Martyrs, from your fields
of light,

Our mortal ken! Inspire a perfect trust
(While we look round) that Heaven's decrees
are just:

Which few can hold committed to a fight
That shows, ev'n on its better side, the
might⁵

Of proud Self-will, Rapacity, and Lust,
'Mid clouds enveloped of polemic dust,
Which showers of blood seem rather to
incite

Than to allay. Anathemas are hurled
From both sides; veteran thunders (the
brute test¹⁰)

Of truth) are met by fulminations new—
Tartarean flags are caught at, and unfurled—

Friends strike at friends—the flying shall
pursue—

And Victory sickens, ignorant where to
rest!

XXXVII

ENGLISH REFORMERS IN EXILE

SCATTERING, like birds escaped the fowler's
net,

Some seek with timely flight a foreign
strand;

Most happy, re-assembled in a land
By dauntless Luther freed, could they
forget

Their Country's woes. But scarcely have
they met,⁵

Partners in faith, and brothers in distress,
Free to pour forth their common thank-
fulness,

Ere hope declines:—their union is beset
With speculative notions rashly sown,
Whence thickly-sprouting growth of poi-
sonous weeds;¹⁰

Their forms are broken staves; their pas-
sions, steeds

That master them. How enviably blest
Is he who can, by help of grace, enthroned
The peace of God within his single breast!

¹ For the belief in this fact, see the contemporary
Historians.

XXXVIII

ELIZABETH

HAIL, Virgin Queen! o'er many an en-
vious bar

Triumphant, snatched from many a trea-
cherous wile!

All hail, sage Lady, whom a grateful Isle
Hath blest, respiring from that dismal
war

Stilled by thy voice! But quickly from
afar⁵

Defiance breathes with more malignant
aim;

And alien storms with home-bred fer-
ments claim

Portentous fellowship. Her silver car,
By sleepless prudence ruled, glides slowly
on;

Unhurt by violence, from menaced taint
Emerging pure, and seemingly more
bright:¹¹

Ah! wherefore yields it to a foul con-
straint

Black as the clouds its beams dispersed,
while shone,

By men and angels blest, the glorious
light?

XXXIX

EMINENT REFORMERS

METHINKS that I could trip o'er heaviest
soil,

Light as a buoyant bark from wave to
wave,

Were mine the trusty staff that JEWEL gave
To youthful HOOKER, in familiar style

The gift exalting, and with playful smile:¹
For thus equipped, and bearing on his
head⁶

The Donor's farewell blessing, can he
dread

Tempest, or length of way, or weight of
toil?—

More sweet than odours caught by him
who sails

Near spicy shores of Araby the blest,¹⁰
A thousand times more exquisitely sweet,

The freight of holy feeling which we meet,
In thoughtful moments, wafted by the gales

From fields where good men walk, or
bowers wherein they rest.

XL

THE SAME

HOLY and heavenly Spirits as they are,
Spotless in life, and eloquent as wise,

With what entire affection do they prize
Their Church reformed! labouring with
earnest care

To baffle all that may her strength im-
pair;⁵

¹ See Note, p. 722.

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

That Church, the unperverted Gospel's
 seat;
 In their afflictions a divine retreat;
 Source of their liveliest hope, and tender-
 est prayer!—
 The truth exploring with an equal mind,
 In doctrine and communion they have
 sought¹⁰
 Firmly between the two extremes to steer;
 But theirs the wise man's ordinary lot,
 To trace right courses for the stubborn
 blind,
 And prophesy to ears that will not hear.

XXI

DISTRACTIONS

MEN, who have ceased to reverence, soon
 defy
 Their forefathers; lo! sects are formed,
 and split
 With morbid restlessness:—the ecstatic fit
 Spreads wide; though special mysteries
 multiply,
The Saints must govern is their common
 cry;⁵
 And so they labour, deeming Holy Writ
 Disgraced by aught that seems content to
 sit
 Beneath the roof of settled Modesty.
 The Romanist exults; fresh hope he draws
 From the confusion, craftily incites¹⁰
 The overweening, personates the mad—
 To heap disgust upon the worthier Cause:
 Totters the Throne; the new-born Church
 is sad,
 For every wave against her peace unites.

XLII

GUNPOWDER PLOT

FEAR hath a hundred eyes that all agree
 To plague her beating heart; and there is
 one
 (Nor idlest that!) which holds communion
 With things that were not, yet were *meant*
 to be.
 Aghast within its gloomy cavity⁵
 That eye (which sees as if fulfilled and
 done
 Crimes that might stop the motion of the
 sun)
 Beholds the horrible catastrophe
 Of an assembled Senate unredeemed
 From subterraneous Treason's darkling
 power;¹⁰
 Merciless act of sorrow infinite!
 Worse than the product of that dismal
 night,
 When gushing, copious as a thunder-
 shower,
 The blood of Huguenots through Paris
 streamed.

XLIII

ILLUSTRATION

THE JUNG-FRAU AND THE FALL OF THE
 RHINE NEAR SCHAFFHAUSEN

THE Virgin-Mountain,¹ wearing like a
 Queen
 A brilliant crown of everlasting snow,
 Sheds ruin from her sides; and men below
 Wonder that aught of aspect so serene
 Can link with desolation. Smooth and
 green,⁵
 And seeming, at a little distance, slow,
 The waters of the Rhine; but on they go
 Fretting and whitening, keener and more
 keen;
 Till madness seizes on the whole wide
 Flood,
 Turned to a fearful Thing whose nostrils
 breathe¹⁰
 Blasts of tempestuous smoke—wherewith
 he tries
 To hide himself, but only magnifies;
 And doth in more conspicuous torment
 writhe,
 Deafening the region in his ireful mood.

XLIV

TROUBLES OF CHARLES THE FIRST

EVEN such the contrast that, where'er we
 move,
 To the mind's eye Religion doth present;
 Now with her own deep quietness content;
 Then, like the mountain, thundering from
 above
 Against the ancient pine-trees of the
 grove⁵
 And the Land's humblest comforts. Now
 her mood
 Recalls the transformation of the flood,
 Whose rage the gentle skies in vain re-
 prove,
 Earth cannot check. O terrible excess
 Of headstrong will! Can this be Piety?
 No—some fierce Maniac hath usurped her
 name;¹¹
 And scourges England struggling to be
 free:
 Her peace destroyed! her hopes a wilder-
 ness!
 Her blessings cursed—her glory turned to
 shame!

XLV

LAUD²

PREJUDGED by foes determined not to
 spare,
 An old weak Man for vengeance thrown
 aside,
 Laud, 'in the painful art of dying' tried,

¹ The Jung-frau.

² See Note, p. 723.

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

(Like a poor bird entangled in a snare
Whose heart still flutters, though his
wings forbear 5
To stir in useless struggle) hath relied
On hope that conscious innocence supplied,
And in his prison breathes celestial air.
Why carries then thy chariot? Wherefore
stay,
O Death! the ensanguined yet triumphant
wheels, 10
Which thou prepar'st, full often, to convey
(What time a State with madding faction
reels)
The Saint or Patriot to the world that
heals
All wounds, all perturbations doth allay?

XLVI

AFFLICTIONS OF ENGLAND

HARP! couldst thou venture, on thy boldest
string,
The faintest note to echo which the blast
Caught from the hand of Moses as it
passed
O'er Sinai's top, or from the Shepherd-
king,
Early awake, by Siloa's brook, to sing 5
Of dread Jehovah; then should wood and
waste
Hear also of that name, and mercy cast
Off to the mountains, like a covering
Of which the Lord was weary. Weep, oh!
weep,
Weep with the good, beholding King and
Priest 10
Despised by that stern God to whom they
raise
Their suppliant hands; but holy is the
feast
He keepeth; like the firmament his ways:
His statutes like the chambers of the deep.

PART III

FROM THE RESTORATION TO THE PRESENT TIMES

I

I SAW the figure of a lovely Maid
Seated alone beneath a darksome tree,
Whose fondly-overhanging canopy
Set off her brightness with a pleasing
shade.
No Spirit was she; that my heart be-
trayed, 5
For she was one I loved exceedingly;
But while I gazed in tender reverie
(Or was it sleep that with my Fancy
played?)
The bright corporeal presence—form and
face—

Remaining still distinct grew thin and
rare, 10
Like sunny mist;—at length the golden
hair,
Shape, limbs, and heavenly features, keep-
ing pace
Each with the other in a lingering race
Of dissolution, melted into air.

II

PATRIOTIC SYMPATHIES

LAST night, without a voice, that Vision
spoke
Fear to my Soul, and sadness which might
seem
Wholly dis severed from our present
theme;
Yet, my beloved Country! I partake
Of kindred agitations for thy sake; 5
Thou, too, dost visit oft my midnight
dream;
Thy glory meets me with the earliest beam
Of light, which tells that Morning is
awake.
If aught impair thy beauty or destroy,
Or but forbode destruction, I deplore 10
With filial love the sad vicissitude;
If thou hast fallen, and righteous Heaven
restore
The prostrate, then my spring-time is re-
newed,
And sorrow bartered for exceeding joy.

III

CHARLES THE SECOND

Who comes—with rapture greeted, and
caressed
With frantic love—his kingdom to regain?
Him Virtue's Nurse, Adversity, in vain
Received, and fostered in her iron breast:
For all she taught of hardiest and of best,
Or would have taught, by discipline of
pain
And long privation, now dissolves amain,
Or is remembered only to give zest
To wantonness.—Away, Circean revels!
But for what gain? if England soon must
sink 10
Into a gulf which all distinction levels—
That bigotry may swallow the good name,
And, with that draught, the life-blood:
misery, shame,
By Poets loathed; from which Historians
shrink!

IV

LATITUDINARIANISM

YET Truth is keenly sought for, and the
wind
Charged with rich words poured out in
thought's defence;
Whether the Church inspire that elo-
quence,

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

VII

PERSECUTION OF THE SCOTTISH COVENANTERS

[Composed (?).—Published 1827.]

Or a Platonic Piety confined
To the sole temple of the inward mind; 5
And One there is who builds immortal
lays,
Though doomed to tread in solitary ways,
Darkness before and danger's voice be-
hind;
Yet not alone, nor helpless to repel
Sad thoughts; for from above the starry
sphere 10
Come secrets, whispered nightly to his
ear;
And the pure spirit of celestial light
Shines through his soul—'that he may
see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight.'

V

WALTON'S BOOK OF LIVES

THERE are no colours in the fairest sky
So fair as these. The feather, whence the
pen
Was shaped that traced the lives of these
good men,
Dropped from an Angel's wing. With
moistened eye
We read of faith and purest charity 5
In Statesman, Priest, and humble Citizen:
Oh could we copy their mild virtues, then
What joy to live, what blessedness to die!
Methinks their very names shine still and
bright;
Apart—like glow-worms on a summer
night; 10
Or lonely tapers when from far they fling
A guiding ray; or seen—like stars on high,
Satellites burning in a lucid ring
Around meek Walton's heavenly memory.

VI

CLERICAL INTEGRITY

NOR shall the eternal roll of praise reject
Those Unconforming; whom one rigor-
ous day
Drives from their Cures, a voluntary prey
To poverty, and grief, and disrespect,
And some to want—as if by tempests
wrecked 5
On a wild coast; how destitute! did They
Feel not that Conscience never can be-
tray,
That peace of mind is Virtue's sure effect.
Their altars they forego, their homes they
quit,
Fields which they love, and paths they
daily trod, 10
And cast the future upon Providence;
As men the dictate of whose inward sense
Outweighs the world; whom self-deceiv-
ing wit
Lures not from what they deem the cause
of God.

WHEN Alpine Vales threw forth a sup-
pliant cry,
The majesty of England interposed
And the sword stopped; the bleeding
wounds were closed;
And Faith preserved her ancient purity.
How little boots that precedent of good,
Scorned or forgotten, Thou canst testify,
For England's shame, O Sister Realm!
from wood,
Mountain, and moor, and crowded street,
where lie
The headless martyrs of the Covenant,
Slain by Compatriot-protestants that
draw 10
From councils senseless as intolerant
Their warrant. Bodies fall by wild sword-
law;
But who would force the Soul tilts with a
straw
Against a Champion cased in adamant.

VIII

ACQUITTAL OF THE BISHOPS

A VOICE, from long-expecting thousands
sent,
Shatters the air, and troubles tower and
spire;
For Justice hath absolved the innocent,
And Tyranny is balked of her desire:
Up, down, the busy Thames—rapid as fire 5
Coursing a train of gunpowder—it went,
And transport finds in every street a vent,
Till the whole City rings like one vast quire.
The Fathers urge the People to be still,
With outstretched hands and earnest
speech—in vain! 10
Yea, many, haply wont to entertain
Small reverence for the mitre's offices,
And to Religion's self no friendly will,
A Prelate's blessing ask on bended knees.

IX

WILLIAM THE THIRD

CALM as an under-current, strong to draw
Millions of waves into itself, and run,
From sea to sea, impervious to the sun
And ploughing storm, the spirit of Nassau
Swerves not, (how blest if by religious awe 5
Swayed, and thereby enabled to contend
With the wide world's commotions) from
its end
Swerves not—diverted by a casual law.
Had mortal action e'er a nobler scope?
The Hero comes to liberate, not defy; 10
And while he marches on with steadfast hope,
Conqueror beloved! expected anxiously!
The vacillating Bondman of the Pope
Shrinks from the verdict of his steadfast eye.

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

X

OBLIGATIONS OF CIVIL TO RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

UNGRATEFUL Country, if thou e'er forget
The sons who for thy civil rights have
bled!

How, like a Roman, Sidney bowed his
head,

And Russell's milder blood the scaffold
wet;

But these had fallen for profitless regret
Had not thy holy Church her champions
bred,

And claims from other worlds inspired
The star of Liberty to rise. Nor yet
(Grave this within thy heart!) if spiritual
things

Be lost, through apathy, or scorn, or fear,
Shalt thou thy humbler franchises sup-
port,

However hardly won or justly dear:
What came from heaven to heaven by
nature clings,

And, if dissevered thence, its course is
short.

XI

SACHEVEREL

[Composed (?).—Published 1827.]

A SUDDEN conflict rises from the swell
Of a proud slavery met by tenets strained
In Liberty's behalf. Fears, true or feigned,
Spread through all ranks; and lo! the
Sentinel

Who loudest rang his pulpit 'larum bell,
Stands at the Bar, absolved by female
eyes

Mingling their glances with grave flat-
teries

Lavished on *Him*—that England may
rebel

Against her ancient virtue. HIGH and
Low,

Watchwords of Party, on all tongues are
rife;

As if a Church, though sprung from hea-
ven, must owe

To opposites and fierce extremes her
life,—

Not to the golden mean, and quiet flow
Of truths that soften hatred, temper strife.

XII

[Composed (?).—Published 1827.]

DOWN a swift Stream, thus far, a bold
design

Have we pursued, with livelier stir of
heart

Than his who sees, borne forward by the
Rhine,

The living landscapes greet him, and
depart;

Sees spires fast sinking—up again to start!

And strives the towers to number, that
recline

O'er the dark steep, or on the horizon line
Striding with shattered crests his eye
athwart.

So have we hurried on with troubled
pleasure:

Henceforth, as on the bosom of a stream
That slackens, and spreads wide a watery
gleam,

We, nothing loth a lingering course to
measure,

May gather up our thoughts, and mark at
leisure

How widely spread the interests of our
theme.

XIII

ASPECTS OF CHRISTIANITY IN AMERICA

I.—THE PILGRIM FATHERS

[Composed 1842.—Published: vol. of 1842.]

WELL worthy to be magnified are they
Who, with sad hearts, of friends and
country took

A last farewell, their loved abodes for-
sook,

And hallowed ground in which their
fathers lay;

Then to the new-found World explored
their way,

That so a Church, unforced, uncalled to
brook

Ritual restraints, within some sheltering
nook

Her Lord might worship and his word
obey

In freedom. Men they were who could
not bend;

Blest Pilgrims, surely, as they took for
guide

A will by sovereign Conscience sanctified;
Blest while their Spirits from the woods
ascend

Along a Galaxy that knows no end,
But in His glory who for Sinners died.

XIV

II.—CONTINUED

[Composed 1842.—Published: vol. of 1842.]

FROM Rite and Ordinance abused they
fled

To Wilds where both were utterly un-
known;

But not to them had Providence fore-
shown

What benefits are missed, what evils bred,
In worship neither raised nor limited

Save by Self-will. Lo! from that distant
shore,

For Rite and Ordinance, Piety is led
Back to the Land those Pilgrims left of
yore,

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

Led by her own free choice. So Truth
and Love
By Conscience governed do their steps
retrace.—
Fathers! your Virtues, such the power of
grace,
Their spirit, in your Children, thus ap-
prove.
Transcendent over time, unbound by
place,
Concord and Charity in circles move.

XV

III.—CONCLUDED.—AMERICAN EPISCOPACY
[Composed 1842.—Published: vol. of 1842.]

PATRIOTS informed with Apostolic light
Were they who, when their Country had
been freed,
Bowing with reverence to the ancient creed,
Fixed on the frame of England's Church
their sight.
And strove in filial love to reunite 5
What force had severed. Thence they
fetched the seed
Of Christian unity, and won a meed
Of praise from Heaven. To Thee, O
saintly WHITE,
Patriarch of a wide-spreading family,
Remotest lands and unborn times shall
turn, 10
Whether they would restore or build—to
Thee,
As one who rightly taught how zeal should
burn,
As one who drew from out Faith's holiest
urn
The purest stream of patient Energy.

XVI

[Composed (?).—Published 1845.]

BISHOPS and Priests, blessed are ye, if
deep
(As yours above all offices is high)
Deep in your hearts the sense of duty lie;
Charged as ye are by Christ to feed and
keep
From wolves your portion of His chosen
sheep: 5
Labouring as ever in your Master's sight,
Making your hardest task your best de-
light,
What perfect glory ye in Heaven shall
reap!—
But in the solemn Office which ye sought
And undertook premonished, if unsound
Your practice prove, faithless though but
in thought, 11
Bishops and Priests, think what a gulf
profound
Awaits you then, if they were rightly
taught
Who framed the Ordinance by your lives
disowned!

XVII

PLACES OF WORSHIP

As star that shines dependent upon star
Is to the sky while we look up in love;
As to the deep fair ships which though
they move
Seem fixed, to eyes that watch them from
afar;
As to the sandy desert fountains are, 5
With palm-groves shaded at wide inter-
vals,
Whose fruit around the sun-burnt Native
falls
Of roving tired or desultory war—
Such to this British Isle her christian
Fanes,
Each linked to each for kindred services;
Her Spires, her Steeple-towers with glit-
tering vanes 11
Far-kenned, her Chapels lurking among
trees,
Where a few villagers on bended knees
Find solace which a busy world disdains.

XVIII

PASTORAL CHARACTER

A GENIAL hearth, a hospitable board,
And a refined rusticity, belong
To the neat mansion, where, his flock
among, 10
The learned Pastor dwells, their watchful
Lord.
Though meek and patient as a sheathed
sword;
Though pride's least lurking thought ap- 5
pear a wrong
To human kind; though peace be on his
tongue,
Gentleness in his heart—can earth afford
Such genuine state, pre-eminence so free,
As when, arrayed in Christ's authority,
He from the pulpit lifts his awful hand;
Conjures, implores, and labours all he can
For re-subjecting to divine command
The stubborn spirit of rebellious man?

XIX

THE LITURGY

YES, if the intensities of hope and fear
Attract us still, and passionate exercise
Of lofty thoughts, the way before us lies
Distinct with signs, through which in set
career,
As through a zodiac, moves the ritual
year 5
Of England's Church; stupendous mys-
teries!
Which whoso travels in her bosom eyes,
As he approaches them, with solemn
cheer.
Upon that circle traced from sacred story
We only dare to cast a transient glance,

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

Trusting in hope that Others may advance¹¹
 With mind intent upon the King of Glory,
 From his mild advent till his countenance
 Shall dissipate the seas and mountains
 hoary.

XX

BAPTISM

[Composed (?).—Published 1827.]

DEAR be the Church that, watching o'er
 the needs

Of Infancy, provides a timely shower
 Whose virtue changes to a christian
 Flower

A Growth from sinful Nature's bed of
 weeds!—

Fittest beneath the sacred roof pro-
 ceeds⁵

The ministration; while parental Love
 Looks on, and Grace descendeth from
 above

As the high service pledges now, now
 pleads.

There, should vain thoughts outspread
 their wings and fly

To meet the coming hours of festal mirth,
 The tombs—which hear and answer that
 brief cry,¹¹

The Infant's notice of his second birth—
 Recall the wandering Soul to sympathy
 With what man hopes from Heaven, yet
 fears from Earth.

XXI

SPONSORS

[Composed (?).—Published 1832.]

FATHER! to God himself we cannot give
 A holier name! then lightly do not bear
 Both names conjoined, but of thy spiritual
 care

Be duly mindful: still more sensitive
 Do Thou, in truth a second Mother, strive
 Against disheartening custom, that by
 Thee⁶

Watched, and with love and pious in-
 dustry

Tended at need, the adopted Plant may
 thrive

For everlasting bloom. Benign and pure
 This Ordinance, whether loss it would
 supply,¹⁰

Prevent omission, help deficiency,
 Or seek to make assurance doubly sure.
 Shame if the consecrated Vow be found
 An idle form, the Word an empty sound!

XXII

CATECHISING

FROM Little down to Least, in due degree,
 Around the Pastor, each in new-wrought
 vest,

Each with a vernal posy at his breast,

We stood, a trembling, earnest Company!
 With low soft murmur, like a distant bee,
 Some spake, by thought-perplexing fears
 betrayed;⁶

And some a bold unerring answer made:
 How fluttered then thy anxious heart for
 me,

Beloved Mother! Thou whose happy
 hand

Had bound the flowers I wore, with faith-
 ful tie:¹⁰

Sweet flowers! at whose inaudible com-
 mand

Her countenance, phantom-like, doth re-
 appear:

O lost too early for the frequent tear,
 And ill requited by this heartfelt sigh!¹

XXIII

CONFIRMATION

[Composed (?).—Published 1827.]

THE Young-ones gathered in from hill
 and dale,

With holiday delight on every brow:

'Tis past away; far other thoughts pre-
 vail;

For they are taking the baptismal Vow
 Upon their conscious selves; their own

lips speak⁵

The solemn promise. Strongest sinews
 fail,

And many a blooming, many a lovely,
 cheek

Under the holy fear of God turns pale;
 While on each head his lawn-robed ser-
 vant lays

An apostolic hand, and with prayer seals
 The Covenant. The Omnipotent will

raise¹¹

Their feeble Souls; and bear with *his* re-
 grets,

Who, looking round the fair assemblage,
 feels

That ere the Sun goes down their child-
 hood sets.

XXIV

CONFIRMATION CONTINUED

[Composed (?).—Published 1827.]

I SAW a Mother's eye intensely bent
 Upon a Maiden trembling as she knelt;

In and for whom the pious Mother felt
 Things that we judge of by a light too

faint:

Tell, if ye may, some star-crowned Muse,
 or Saint!⁵

Tell what rushed in, from what she was
 relieved—

Then, when her Child the hallowing touch
 received,

¹ See Bishop Wordsworth's *Memoirs of William Wordsworth*, i. 8; and *The Prelude*, Bk. V, ll. 256-293.—Ed.

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

And such vibration through the Mother
 went
 That tears burst forth amain. Did gleams
 appear?
 Opened a vision of that blissful place 10
 Where dwells a Sister-child? And was
 power given
 Part of her lost One's glory back to trace
 Even to this Rite? For thus *She* knelt,
 and, ere
 The summer-leaf had faded, passed to
 Heaven.

XXV

SACRAMENT

[Composed (?).—Published 1827.]

By chain yet stronger must the Soul be
 tied:
 One duty more, last stage of this ascent,
 Brings to thy food, mysterious Sacra-
 ment!
 The Offspring, haply at the Parent's side;
 But not till They, with all that do abide
 In Heaven, have lifted up their hearts to
 laud 6
 And magnify the glorious name of God,
 Fountain of Grace, whose Son for sinners
 died.
 Ye, who have duly weighed the summons,
 pause
 No longer: ye, whom to the saving rite 10
 The Altar calls; come early under laws
 That can secure for you a path of light
 Through gloomiest shade; put on (nor
 dread its weight)
 Armour divine, and conquer in your
 cause!

XXVI

THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY

[Composed 1842.—Published 1845.]

THE Vested Priest before the Altar stands:
 Approach, come gladly, ye prepared, in
 sight
 Of God and chosen friends, your troth to
 plight
 With the symbolic ring, and willing hands
 Solemnly joined. Now sanctify the bands
 O Father!—to the Espoused thy blessing
 give, 6
 That mutually assisted they may live
 Obedient, as here taught, to thy com-
 mands.
 So prays the Church, to consecrate a Vow
 'The which would endless matrimony
 make;' 10
 Union that shadows forth and doth par-
 take
 A mystery potent human love to endow
 With heavenly, each more prized for the
 other's sake;
 Weep not, meek Bride! uplift thy timid
 brow.

XXVII

THANKSGIVING AFTER CHILDBIRTH

[Composed 1842 (?).—Published 1845.]

WOMAN! the Power who left His throne
 on high,
 And deigned to wear the robe of flesh we
 wear,
 The Power that thro' the straits of Infancy
 Did pass dependent on maternal care,
 His own humanity with Thee will share,
 Pleased with the thanks that in His
 People's eye 6
 Thou offerest up for safe Delivery
 From Childbirth's perilous throes. And
 should the Hei-
 Of thy fond hopes hereafter walk inclined
 To courses fit to make a mother rue 10
 That ever he was born, a glance of mind
 Cast upon this observance may renew
 A better will; and, in the imagined view
 Of thee thus kneeling, safety he may find.

XXVIII

VISITATION OF THE SICK

[Composed 1842 (?).—Published 1845.]

THE Sabbath bells renew the inviting
 peal;
 Glad music! yet there be that, worn with
 pain
 And sickness, listen where they long have
 lain,
 In sadness listen. With maternal zeal
 Inspired, the Church sends ministers to
 kneel 5
 Beside the afflicted; to sustain with prayer,
 And soothe the heart confession hath laid
 bare—
 That pardon, from God's throne, may set
 its seal
 On a true Penitent. When breath departs
 From one disburthened so, so comforted,
 His Spirit Angels greet; and ours be hope
 That, if the Sufferer rise from his sick-
 bed, 12
 Hence he will gain a firmer mind, to cope
 With a bad world, and foil the Tempter's
 arts.

XXIX

THE COMMUNION SERVICE

[Composed 1842 (?).—Published 1845.]

SHUN not this Rite, neglected, yea ab-
 horred,
 By some of unreflecting mind, as calling
 Man to curse man, (thought monstrous
 and appalling).
 Go thou and hear the threatenings of the
 Lord;
 Listening within his Temple see his sword
 Unsheathed in wrath to strike the of-
 fender's head, 6
 Thy own, if sorrow for thy sin be dead,

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

Guilt unrepented, pardon unimplored.
Two aspects bears Truth needful for
salvation;
Who knows not *that*?—yet would this
delicate age ¹⁰
Look only on the Gospel's brighter page:
Let light and dark duly our thoughts
employ;
So shall the fearful words of Commination
Yield timely fruit of peace and love and
joy.

XXX

FORMS OF PRAYER AT SEA

[Composed 1842 (?).—Published 1845.]

To kneeling Worshipers no earthly floor
Gives holier invitation than the deck
Of a storm-shattered Vessel saved from
Wreck
(When all that Man could do availed no
more)
By Him who raised the Tempest and re-
strains:
Happy the crew who this have felt, and ⁵
pour
Forth for His mercy, as the Church or-
dains,
Solemn thanksgiving. Nor will *they* im-
plore
In vain who, for a rightful cause, give
breath
To words the Church prescribes aiding ¹⁰
the lip
For the heart's sake, ere ship with hostile
ship
Encounters, armed for work of pain and
death.
Suppliants! the God to whom your cause
ye trust
Will listen, and ye know that He is just.

XXXI

FUNERAL SERVICE

[Composed 1842.—Published 1845.]

FROM the Baptismal hour, thro' weal and
woe,
The Church extends her care to thought
and deed;
Nor quits the Body when the Soul is
freed,
The mortal weight cast off to be laid low.
Blest Rite for him who hears in faith,
'I know ⁵
That my Redeemer liveth,'—hears each
word
That follows—striking on some kindred
chord
Deep in the thankful heart;—yet tears
will flow.
Man is as grass that springeth up at morn,
Grows green, and is cut down and wither-
eth ¹⁰

Ere nightfall—truth that well may claim
a sigh,
Its natural echo; but hope comes reborn
At Jesu's bidding. We rejoice, 'O Death,
Where is thy Sting?—O Grave, where is
thy Victory?'

XXXII

RURAL CEREMONY¹

CLOSING the sacred Book which long has
fed
Our meditations, give we to a day
Of annual joy one tributary lay;
This day, when, forth by rustic music
led,
The village Children, while the sky is red
With evening lights, advance in long
array ⁶
Through the still churchyard, each with
garland gay,
That, carried sceptre-like, o'ertops the
head
Of the proud Bearer. To the wide church-
door,
Charged with these offerings which their
fathers bore ¹⁰
For decoration in the Papal time,
The innocent Procession softly moves:—
The spirit of Laud is pleased in heaven's
pure clime,
And Hooker's voice the spectacle ap-
proves!

XXXIII

REGRETS

WOULD that our scrupulous Sires had
dared to leave
Less scanty measure of those graceful
rites
And usages, whose due return invites
A stir of mind too natural to deceive;
Giving to Memory help when she would
weave ⁵
A crown for Hope!—I dread the boasted
lights
That all too often are but fiery blights,
Killing the bud o'er which in vain we
grieve.
Go, seek, when Christmas snows discom-
fort bring,
The counter Spirit found in some gay
church ¹⁰
Green with fresh holly, every pew a
perch
In which the linnet or the thrush might
sing,
Merry and loud and safe from prying
search,
Strains offered only to the genial Spring.

¹ See Note, p. 723.

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

XXXIV

MUTABILITY

FROM low to high doth dissolution climb,
And sink from high to low, along a
scale

Of awful notes, whose concord shall not
fail;

A musical but melancholy chime,
Which they can hear who meddle not
with crime, 5

Nor avarice, nor over-anxious care.
Truth fails not; but her outward forms
that bear

The longest date do melt like frosty rime,
That in the morning whitened hill and
plain

And is no more; drop like the tower
sublime 10

Of yesterday, which royally did wear
His crown of weeds, but could not even
sustain

Some casual shout that broke the silent
air,

Or the unimaginable touch of Time.

XXXV

OLD ABBEYS

MONASTIC Domes! following my down-
ward way,
Untouched by due regret I marked your
fall!

Now, ruin, beauty, ancient stillness, all
Dispose to judgments temperate as we lay
On our past selves in life's declining day:
For as, by discipline of Time made wise,
We learn to tolerate the infirmities

And faults of others—gently as he may,
So with our own the mild Instructor deals,
Teaching us to forget them or forgive. 10
Perversely curious, then, for hidden ill
Why should we break Time's charitable
seals?

Once ye were holy, ye are holy still;
Your spirit freely let me drink, and live.

XXXVI

EMIGRANT FRENCH CLERGY

[Composed (?).—Published 1827.]

EVEN while I speak, the sacred roofs of
France

Are shattered into dust; and self-exiled
From altars threatened, levelled, or de-
filed,

Wander the Ministers of God, as chance
Opens a way for life, or consonance 5
Of faith invites. More welcome to no land
The fugitives than to the British strand,
Where priest and layman with the
vigilance

Of true compassion greet them. Creed
and test

Vanish before the unreserved embrace
Of catholic humanity:—distrest 11

They came,—and, while the moral tem-
pest roars

Throughout the Country they have left,
our shores

Give to their Faith a fearless resting-
place.

XXXVII

CONGRATULATION

THUS all things lead to Charity, secured
By THEM who blessed the soft and happy
gale

That laudward urged the great Deliverer's
sail,

Till in the sunny bay his fleet was moored!
Propitious hour! had we, like them,
endured 5

Sore stress of apprehension,¹ with a mind
Sickened by injuries, dreading worse de-
signed,

From month to month trembling and un-
assured,

How had we then rejoiced! But we have
felt,

As a loved substance, their futurity: 10
Good, which they dared not hope for, we
have seen;

A State whose generous will through
earth is dealt;

A State—which, balancing herself be-
tween

Licence and slavish order, dares be free.

XXXVIII

NEW CHURCHES

BUT liberty, and triumphs on the Main,
And laurelled armies, not to be with-
stood—

What serve they? if, on transitory good
Intent, and sedulous of abject gain,

The State (ah, surely not preserved in
vain!) 5

Forbear to shape due channels which the
Flood

Of sacred truth may enter—till it brood
O'er the wide realm, as o'er the Egyptian
plain

The all-sustaining Nile. No more—the
time

Is conscious of her want; through
England's bounds, 10

In rival haste, the wished-for Temples
rise!

I hear their sabbath bells' harmonious
chime

Float on the breeze—the heavenliest of
all sounds

That vale or hill prolongs or multiplies!

¹ See Note, p. 723.

ECCLIASTICAL SONNETS

XXXIX

CHURCH TO BE ERECTED

BE this the chosen site; the virgin sod,
Moistened from age to age by dewy eve,
Shall disappear, and grateful earth receive
The corner-stone from hands that build
to God.

Yon reverend hawthorns, hardened to
the rod⁵

Of winter storms, yet budding cheerfully;
Those forest oaks of Druid memory,
Shall long survive, to shelter the Abode
Of genuine Faith. Where, haply, 'mid
this band

Of daisies, shepherds sate of yore and
wove¹⁰

May-garlands, there let the holy altar
stand

For kneeling adoration;—while—above,
Broods, visibly portrayed, the mystic
Dove,

That shall protect from blasphemy the
Land.

XL

CONTINUED

MINE ear has rung, my spirit sunk sub-
dued,

Sharing the strong emotion of the crowd,
When each pale brow to dread hosannas
bowed

While clouds of incense mounting veiled
the rood,

That glimmered like a pine-tree dimly
viewed⁵

Through Alpine vapours. Such appalling
rite

Our Church prepares not, trusting to the
might

Of simple truth with grace divine imbued;
Yet will we not conceal the precious
Cross,

Like men ashamed: the Sun with his
first smile¹⁰

Shall greet that symbol crowning the low
Pile:

And the fresh air of incense-breathing
morn

Shall wooingly embrace it; and green moss
Creep round its arms through centuries
unborn.

XLI

NEW CHURCHYARD

THE encircling ground, in native turf
arrayed,

Is now by solemn consecration given
To social interests, and to favouring
Heaven;

And where the rugged colts their gambols
played,

And wild deer bounded through the
forest glade,⁵

Unchecked as when by merry Outlaw
driven,

Shall hymns of praise resound at morn
and even;

And soon, full soon, the lonely Sexton's
spade

Shall wound the tender sod. Encincture
small,

But infinite its grasp of weal and woe!
Hopes, fears, in never-ending ebb and
flow;—¹¹

The spousal trembling, and the 'dust to
dust,'

The prayers, the contrite struggle, and
the trust

That to the Almighty Father looks
through all.

XLII

CATHEDRALS, ETC.

OPEN your gates, ye everlasting Piles!
Types of the spiritual Church which God
hath reared;

Not loth we quit the newly-hallowed
sward

And humble altar, 'mid your sumptuous
aisles⁴

To kneel, or thrud your intricate defiles,
Or down the nave to pace in motion slow;

Watching, with upward eye, the tall
tower grow

And mount, at every step, with living
wiles

Instinct—to rouse the heart and lead the
will⁹

By a bright ladder to the world above.
Open your gates, ye Monuments of love

Divine! thou Lincoln, on thy sovereign
hill!

Thou, stately York! and Ye, whose
splendours cheer

Isis and Cam, to patient Science dear!

XLIII

INSIDE OF KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL CAMBRIDGE¹

TAX not the royal Saint with vain ex-
pense,

With ill-matched aims the Architect who
planned—

Albeit labouring for a scanty band
Of white-robed Scholars only—this im-
mense⁴

And glorious Work of fine intelligence!
Give all thou canst; high Heaven rejects
the lore

Of nicely-calculated less or more;
So deemed the man who fashioned for the
sense

¹ Wordsworth appears to have written one at least
of these sonnets (XLII–XLV), and perhaps wrote all
three, during a visit to his brother Christopher
(Master of Trinity) at Cambridge, Nov.–Dec., 1820.

—ED.

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

These lofty pillars, spread that branching
 roof
 Self-poised, and scooped into ten thou-
 sand cells, 10
 Where light and shade repose, where
 music dwells
 Linger—and wandering on as loth to
 die;
 Like thoughts whose very sweetness yield-
 eth proof
 That they were born for immortality.

XLIV

THE SAME

WHAT awful perspective! while from our
 sight
 With gradual stealth the lateral windows
 hide
 Their Portraits, their stone-work glim-
 mers, dyed
 In the soft chequerings of a sleepy light.
 Martyr, or King, or sainted Eremit, 5
 Whoe'er ye be, that thus, yourselves un-
 seen,
 Imbue your prison-bars with solemn
 sheen,
 Shine on, until ye fade with coming
 Night!—
 But, from the arms of silence—list! O list!
 The music bursteth into second life; 10
 The notes luxuriate, every stone is kissed
 By sound, or ghost of sound, in mazy
 strife;
 Heart-thrilling strains, that cast, before
 the eye
 Of the devout, a veil of ecstasy!

XLV

CONTINUED

THEY dreamt not of a perishable home
 Who thus could build. Be mine, in
 hours of fear
 Or grovelling thought, to seek a refuge
 here;
 Or through the aisles of Westminster to
 roam;
 Where bubbles burst, and folly's dancing
 foam 5
 Melts, if it cross the threshold; where the
 wreath
 Of awe-struck wisdom droops: or let my
 path
 Lead to that younger Pile, whose sky-
 like dome
 Hath typified by reach of daring art
 Infinity's embrace; whose guardian crest,

The silent Cross, among the stars shall
 spread 11
 As now, when She hath also seen her
 breast
 Filled with mementos, satiate with its part
 Of grateful England's overflowing Dead.

XLVI

EJACULATION

GLORY to God! and to the Power who
 came
 In filial duty, clothed with love divine,
 That made His human tabernacle shine
 Like Ocean burning with purpleal flame;
 Or like the Alpine Mount, that takes its
 name 5
 From roseate hues, far kenne'd at morn
 and even,
 In hours of peace, or when the storm is
 driven
 Along the nether region's rugged frame!
 Earth prompts—Heaven urges; let us
 seek the light,
 Studious of that pure intercourse begun
 When first our infant brows their lustre
 won; 11
 So, like the Mountain, may we grow
 more bright
 From unimpeded commerce with the Sun,
 At the approach of all-involving night.

XLVII

CONCLUSION

WHY sleeps the future, as a snake en-
 rolled,
 Coil within coil, at noon-tide? For the
 WORD
 Yields, if with unpresumptuous faith
 explored,
 Power at whose touch the sluggard shall
 unfold
 His drowsy rings. Look forth!—that
 Stream behold, 5
 THAT STREAM upon whose bosom we
 have passed
 Floating at ease while nations have
 effaced
 Nations, and Death has gathered to his fold
 Long lines of mighty Kings—look forth,
 my Soul! 9
 (Nor in this vision be thou slow to trust)
 The living Waters, less and less by guilt
 Stained and polluted, brighten as they roll,
 Till they have reached the eternal City—
 built
 For the perfected Spirits of the just!

EVENING VOLUNTARIES

I

[Composed 1832.—Published 1835.]

CALM is the fragrant air, and loth to lose
 Day's grateful warmth, tho' moist with falling dews.
 Look for the stars, you'll say that there are none;
 Look up a second time, and, one by one,
 You mark them twinkling out with silvery light,
 And wonder how they could elude the sight!
 The birds, of late so noisy in their bowers,
 Warbled a while with faint and fainter powers,
 But now are silent as the dim-seen flowers:
 Nor does the village Church-clock's iron tone
 The time's and season's influence disown;
 Nine beats distinctly to each other bound
 In drowsy sequence—how unlike the sound
 That, in rough winter, oft inflicts a fear
 On fireside listeners, doubting what they hear!
 The shepherd, bent on rising with the sun,
 Had closed his door before the day was done,
 And now with thankful heart to bed doth creep,
 And joins his little children in their sleep.
 The bat, lured forth where trees the lane o'er shade,
 Flits and refits along the close arcade;
 The busy dor-hawk chases the white moth
 With burring note, which Industry and Sloth
 Might both be pleased with, for it suits them both.
 A stream is heard—I see it not, but know
 By its soft music whence the waters flow:
 Wheels and the tread of hoofs are heard no more;
 One boat there was, but it will touch the shore
 With the next dipping of its slackened oar;
 Faint sound, that, for the gayest of the gay,
 Might give to serious thought a moment's sway,
 As a last token of man's toilsome day!

II

ON A HIGH PART OF THE COAST OF CUMBERLAND

Easter Sunday, April 7.

THE AUTHOR'S SIXTY-THIRD BIRTHDAY

[Composed April 7, 1833.—Published 1835.]

THE Sun, that seemed so mildly to retire,
 Flung back from distant climes a streaming fire,
 Whose blaze is now subdued to tender gleams,
 Prelude of night's approach with soothing dreams.
 Look round;—of all the clouds not one is moving;
 'Tis the still hour of thinking, feeling, loving.
 Silent, and steadfast as the vaulted sky,
 The boundless plain of waters seems to lie:—
 Comes that low sound from breezes rustling o'er
 The grass-crowned headland that conceals the shore?
 No; 'tis the earth-voice of the mighty sea,
 Whispering how meek and gentle he can be!

Thou Power supreme! who, arming to rebuke
 Offenders, dost put off the gracious look,
 And clothe thyself with terrors like the flood
 Of Ocean roused into his fiercest mood,
 Whatever discipline thy Will ordain
 For the brief course that must for me remain;
 Teach me with quick-eared spirit to rejoice
 In admonitions of thy softest voice!
 Whate'er the path these mortal feet may trace,
 Breathe through my soul the blessing of thy grace,
 Glad, through a perfect love, a faith sincere
 Drawn from the wisdom that begins with fear,
 Glad to expand; and, for a season, free
 From finite cares, to rest absorbed in Thee!

III

(BY THE SEA-SIDE)

[Composed 1833.—Published 1835.]

THE sun is couched, the sea-fowl gone to rest,
 And the wild storm hath somewhere found a nest;

EVENING VOLUNTARIES

Air slumbers—wave with wave no longer
strives,

Only a heaving of the deep survives,
A tell-tale motion! soon will it be laid, 5
And by the tide alone the water swayed.
Stealthy withdrawals, interminglings
mild

Of light with shade in beauty reconciled—
Such is the prospect far as sight can range,
The soothing recompense, the welcome
change. 10

Where now the ships that drove before
the blast,
Threatened by angry breakers as they
passed;

And by a train of flying clouds bemocked:
Or, in the hollow surge, at anchor rocked
As on a bed of death? Some lodge in
peace. 15

Saved by His care who bade the tempest
cease;
And some, too heedless of past danger,
court

Fresh gales to waft them to the far-off
port;

But near, or hanging sea and sky between,
Not one of all those winged powers is
seen. 20

Seen in her course, nor 'mid this quiet
heard;

Yet oh! how gladly would the air be
stirred

By some acknowledgment of thanks and
praise,

Soft in its temper as those vesper lays
Sung to the Virgin while accordant oars
Urge the slow bark along Calabrian
shores; 26

A sea-born service through the mountains
felt

Till into one loved vision all things melt:
Or like those hymns that soothe with
graver sound 29

The gulfy coast of Norway iron-bound;
And, from the wide and open Baltic, rise
With punctual care, Lutheran harmonies.
Hush, not a voice is here! but why repine,
Now when the star of eve comes forth to
shine

On British waters with that look benign?
Ye mariners, that plough your onward
way, 36

Or in the haven rest, or sheltering bay,
May silent thanks at least to God be given
With a full heart; 'our thoughts are heard
in heaven!'

IV

[Composed 1834.—Published 1835.]

Not in the lucid intervals of life
That come but as a curse to party-strife;
Not in some hour when Pleasure with a
sigh
Of languor puts his rosy garland by;

Not in the breathing-times of that poor
slave

Who daily piles up wealth in Mammon's⁵
cave—

Is Nature felt, or can be; nor do words,
Which practised talent readily affords,
Prove that her hand has touched re-
sponsive chords;

Nor has her gentle beauty power to
move 10

With genuine rapture and with fervent love
The soul of Genius, if he dare to take
Life's rule from passion craved for
passion's sake;

Untaught that meekness is the cherished
bent 14

Of all the truly great and all the innocent.

But who is innocent? By grace divine,
Not otherwise, O Nature! we are thine,
Through good and evil thine, in just degree
Of rational and manly sympathy.

To all that Earth from pensive hearts is
stealing, 20

And Heaven is now to gladdened eyes
revealing,

Add every charm the Universe can show
Through every change its aspects under-
go—

Care may be respited, but not repealed;
No perfect cure grows on that bounded
field. 25

Vain is the pleasure, a false calm the peace,
If He, through whom alone our conflicts
cease,

Our virtuous hopes without relapse ad-
vance,

Come not to speed the Soul's deliverance;
To the distempered Intellect refuse 30
His gracious help, or give what we abuse.

V

(BY THE SIDE OF RYDAL MERE)

[Composed 1834.—Published 1835.]

The linnet's warble, sinking towards a
close,

Hints to the thrush 'tis time for their
repose;

The shrill-voiced thrush is heedless, and
again

The monitor revives his own sweet strain;
But both will soon be mastered, and the
copse 5

Be left as silent as the mountain-tops,
Ere some commanding star dismiss to rest
The throng of rooks, that now, from twig
or nest,

(After a steady flight on home-bound
wings,

And a last game of mazy hoverings 10
Around their ancient grove) with cawing
noise

Disturb the liquid music's equipolse.

EVENING VOLUNTARIES

O Nightingale! Who ever heard thy
 song
 Might here be moved, till Fancy grows
 so strong
 That listening sense is pardonably cheated
 Where wood or stream by thee was never
 greeted.¹⁶
 Surely, from fairest spots of favoured lands,
 Were not some gifts withheld by jealous
 hands,
 This hour of deepening darkness here
 would be
 As a fresh morning for new harmony; ²⁰
 And lays as prompt would hail the dawn
 of Night:
 A dawn she has both beautiful and bright,
 When the East kindles with the full
 moon's light;
 Not like the rising sun's impatient glow
 Dazzling the mountains, but an overflow
 Of solemn splendour, in mutation slow.

Wanderer by spring with gradual pro-
 gress led,²⁷
 For sway profoundly felt as widely spread;
 To king, to peasant, to rough sailor, dear,
 And to the soldier's trumpet-wearied ear;
 How welcome wouldst thou be to this
 green Vale³¹
 Fairer than Tempe! Yet, sweet Night-
 ingale!
 From the warm breeze that bears thee on,
 alight
 At will, and stay thy migratory flight;
 Build, at thy choice, or sing, by pool or
 fount,³⁵
 Who shall complain, or call thee to
 account?
 The wisest, happiest, of our kind are they
 That ever walk content with Nature's way,
 God's goodness—measuring bounty as it
 may;
 For whom the gravest thought of what
 they miss,⁴⁰
 Chastening the fulness of a present bliss,
 Is with that wholesome office satisfied,
 While unrepining sadness is allied
 In thankful bosoms to a modest pride.

VI

[Composed 1834.—Published 1835.]

SOFT as a cloud is yon blue Ridge—the
 Mere
 Seems firm as solid crystal, breathless,
 clear,
 And motionless; and, to the gazer's eye,
 Deeper than ocean, in the immensity ⁴
 Of its vague mountains and unreal sky!
 But, from the process in that still retreat,
 Turn to minuter changes at our feet;
 Observe how dewy Twilight has with-
 drawn
 The crowd of daisies from the shaven lawn,

And has restored to view its tender
 green,¹⁰
 That, while the sun rode high, was lost
 beneath their dazzling sheen.
 —An emblem this of what the sober Hour
 Can do for minds disposed to feel its
 power!
 Thus oft, when we in vain have wished
 away
 The petty pleasures of the garish day, ¹⁵
 Meek eve shuts up the whole usurping host
 (Unbashful dwarfs each glittering at his
 post)
 And leaves the disencumbered spirit free
 To reassume a staid simplicity.

'Tis well—but what are helps of time
 and place,²⁰
 When wisdom stands in need of nature's
 grace;
 Why do good thoughts, invoked or not,
 descend,
 Like Angels from their bowers, our
 virtues to befriend;
 If yet To-morrow, unbelied, may say,
 'I come to open out, for fresh display,
 The elastic vanities of yesterday?' ²⁶

VII

[Composed 1834.—Published 1835.]

THE leaves that rustled on this oak-
 crowned hill,
 And sky that danced among those leaves,
 are still;
 Rest smooths the way for sleep; in field
 and bower
 Soft shades and dews have shed their
 blended power
 On drooping eyelid and the closing
 flower;⁵
 Sound is there none at which the faintest
 heart
 Might leap, the weakest nerve of super-
 stition start;
 Save when the Owllet's unexpected scream
 Pierces the ethereal vault; and ('mid the
 gleam
 Of unsubstantial imagery, the dream, ¹⁰
 From the hushed vale's realities, trans-
 ferred
 To the still lake) the imaginative Bird
 Seems, 'mid inverted mountains, not un-
 heard.

Grave Creature!—whether, while the
 moon shines bright
 On thy wings opened wide for smoothest
 flight,¹⁵
 Thou art discovered in a roofless tower,
 Rising from what may once have been a
 lady's bower;
 Or spied where thou sitt'st moping in
 thy mew
 At the dim centre of a churchyard yew;

EVENING VOLUNTARIES

Or from a rifted crag or ivy tod 20
 Deep in a forest, thy secure abode,
 Thou giv'st, for pastime's sake, thy shriek
 or shout,
 A puzzling notice of thy whereabouts—
 May the night never come, nor day be
 seen,
 When I shall scorn thy voice or mock thy
 mien! 25

In classic ages men perceived a soul
 Of sapience in thy aspect, headless Owl!
 Thee Athens revered in the studious
 grove;
 And near the golden sceptre grasped by
 Jove,
 His Eagle's favourite perch, while round
 him sate 30
 The Gods revolving the decrees of Fate,
 Thou, too, wert present at Minerva's
 side:—
 Hark to that second larum!—far and
 wide
 The elements have heard, and rock and
 cave replied.

VIII

[Composed June 8, 1802.—Published 1807; omitted from edd. 1815–1832; republished 1835.]

This *Impromptu* appeared, many years ago, among the Author's poems, from which, in subsequent editions, it was excluded. It is reprinted at the request of the Friend in whose presence the lines were thrown off.

THE sun has long been set,
 The stars are out by twos and threes,
 The little birds are piping yet
 Among the bushes and trees;
 There's a cuckoo, and one or two 5
 thrushes,
 And a far-off wind that rushes,
 And a sound of water that gushes,
 And the cuckoo's sovereign cry
 Fills all the hollow of the sky.

Who would go 'parading'
 In London, 'and masquerading,'
 On such a night of June
 With that beautiful soft half-moon,
 And all these innocent blisses?
 On such a night as this is!

IX

COMPOSED UPON AN EVENING OF EXTRAORDINARY SPLENDOUR AND BEAUTY

[Composed 1818.—Published 1820.]

I

HAD this effulgence disappeared
 With flying haste, I might have sent,
 Among the speechless clouds, a look
 Of blank astonishment;
 But 'tis endued with power to stay,
 And sanctify one closing day,

That frail Mortality may see—
 What is?—ah no, but what *can* be!
 Time was when field and watery cove
 With modulated echoes rang, 10
 While choirs of fervent Angels sang
 Their vespers in the grove;
 Or, crowning, star-like, each some
 sovereign height,
 Warbled, for heaven above and earth
 below,
 Strains suitable to both.—Such holy rite,
 Methinks, if audibly repeated now 16
 From hill or valley, could not move
 Sublimier transport, purer love,
 Than doth this silent spectacle—the
 gleam—
 The shadow—and the peace supreme! 20

II

No sound is uttered,—but a deep
 And solemn harmony pervades
 The hollow vale from steep to steep,
 And penetrates the glades.
 Far-distant images draw nigh, 25
 Called forth by wondrous potency
 Of beamy radiance, that imbues
 Whate'er it strikes with gem-like hues!
 In vision exquisitely clear,
 Herds range along the mountain side; 30
 And glistening antlers are descried;
 And gilded flocks appear.
 Thine is the tranquil hour, purpureal
 Eve!
 But long as god-like wish, or hope divine,
 Informs my spirit, ne'er can I believe 35
 That this magnificence is wholly thine!
 —From worlds not quickened by the sun
 A portion of the gift is won;
 An intermingling of Heaven's pomp is
 spread
 On ground which British shepherds 40
 tread!

III

And if there be whom broken ties
 Afflict, or injuries assail,
 Yon hazy ridges to their eyes
 Present a glorious scale,
 Climbing suffused with sunny air, 45
 To stop—no record hath told where!
 And tempting Fancy to ascend,
 And with immortal Spirits blend!
 —Wings at my shoulders seem to play;
 But, rooted here, I stand and gaze 50
 On those bright steps that heavenward
 raise
 Their practicable way.
 Come forth, ye drooping old men, look
 abroad,
 And see to what fair countries ye are
 bound!
 And if some traveller, weary of his road,
 Hath slept since noon-tide on the grassy 56
 ground,

EVENING VOLUNTARIES

Ye Genii! to his covert speed;
And wake him with such gentle heed
As may attune his soul to meet the
dower
Bestowed on this transcendent hour! 60

IV

Such hues from their celestial Urn
Were wont to stream before mine eye,
Where'er it wandered in the morn
Of blissful infancy.
This glimpse of glory, why renewed? 65
Nay, rather speak with gratitude;
For, if a vestige of those gleams
Survived, 'twas only in my dreams.
Dread Power! whom peace and calmness
serve
No less than Nature's threatening voice,
If aught unworthy be my choice, 71
From THEE if I would swerve;
Oh, let Thy grace remind me of the light
Full early lost, and fruitlessly deplored;
Which, at this moment, on my waking
sight 75
Appears to shine, by miracle restored;
My soul, though yet confined to earth,
Rejoices in a second birth!
—'Tis past, the visionary splendour fades;
And night approaches with her shades.

Note.—The multiplication of mountain-ridges, described at the commencement of the third Stanza of this Ode as a kind of Jacob's Ladder, leading to Heaven, is produced either by watery vapours, or sunny haze;—in the present instance by the latter cause. Allusions to the Ode entitled 'Intimations of Immortality' pervade the last Stanza of the foregoing Poem.

X

COMPOSED BY THE SEA-SHORE

[Composed 1833.—Published 1845.]

WHAT mischief cleaves to unsubdued
regret,
How fancy sickens by vague hopes beset;
How baffled projects on the spirit prey,
And fruitless wishes eat the heart away,
The Sailor knows; he best, whose lot is
cast 5
On the relentless sea that holds him fast
On chance dependent, and the fickle star
Of power, through long and melancholy
war.
O sad it is, in sight of foreign shores,
Daily to think on old familiar doors, 10
Hearths loved in childhood, and ancestral
floors;
Or, tossed about along a waste of foam,
To ruminate on that delightful home
Which with the dear Betrothed was to
come;
Or came and was and is, yet meets the eye
Never but in the world of memory; 16

Or in a dream recalled, whose smoothest
range
Is crossed by knowledge, or by dread, of
change,
And if not so, whose perfect joy makes
sleep
A thing too bright for breathing man to
keep. 20
Hail to the virtues which that perilous life
Extracts from Nature's elemental strife;
And welcome glory won in battles fought
As bravely as the foe was keenly sought.
But to each gallant Captain and his crew
A less imperious sympathy is due, 26
Such as my verse now yields, while moon-
beams play
On the mute sea in this unruffled bay;
Such as will promptly flow from every
breast,
Where good men, disappointed in the
quest 30
Of wealth and power and honours, long
for rest;
Or, having known the splendours of
success,
Sigh for the obscurities of happiness.

XI

[Composed ?—Published: vol. of 1842.]

THE Crescent-moon, the Star of Love,
Glories of evening, as ye there are seen
With but a span of sky between—
Speak one of you, my doubts remove,
Which is the attendant Page and which
the Queen? 5

XII

TO THE MOON

COMPOSED BY THE SEASIDE,—ON THE
COAST OF CUMBERLAND

[Composed 1835.—Published 1837.]

WANDERER! that stoop'st so low, and
com'st so near
To human life's unsettled atmosphere;
Who lov'st with Night and Silence to
partake,
So might it seem, the cares of them that
wake;
And, through the cottage-lattice softly
peeping, 5
Dost shield from harm the humblest of
the sleeping;
What pleasure once encompassed those
sweet names
Which yet in thy behalf the Poet claims,
An idolizing dreamer as of yore!—
I slight them all; and, on this sea-beat
shore 10
Sole-sitting, only can to thoughts attend
That bid me hail thee as the SAILOR'S
FRIEND;

EVENING VOLUNTARIES

So call thee for heaven's grace through
 thee made known
 By confidence supplied and mercy shown,
 When not a twinkling star or beacon's
 light 15
 Abates the perils of a stormy night;
 And for less obvious benefits, that find
 Their way, with thy pure help, to heart
 and mind;
 Both for the adventurer starting in life's
 prime;
 And veteran ranging round from clime to
 clime, 20
 Long-baffled hope's slow fever in his
 veins,
 And wounds and weakness oft his labour's
 sole remains.

The aspiring Mountains and the wind-
 ing Streams,
 Empress of Night! are gladdened by thy
 beams; 24
 A look of thine the wilderness pervades,
 And penetrates the forest's inmost shades;
 Thou, chequering peaceably the minster's
 gloom,
 Guid'st the pale Mourner to the lost one's
 tomb;
 Canst reach the Prisoner—to his grated
 cell
 Welcome, though silent and intangible!—
 And lives there one, of all that come and
 go 31
 On the great waters toiling to and fro,
 One, who has watched thee at some quiet
 hour
 Enthroned aloft in undisputed power,
 Or crossed by vapoury streaks and clouds
 that move 35
 Catching the lustre they in part reprove—
 Nor sometimes felt a fitness in thy sway
 To call up thoughts that shun the glare
 of day,
 And make the serious happier than the
 gay?

Yes, lovely Moon! if thou so mildly
 bright 40
 Dost rouse, yet surely in thy own despite,
 To fiercer mood the frenzy-stricken
 brain,
 Let me a compensating faith maintain;
 That there's a sensitive, a tender, part
 Which thou canst touch in every human
 heart, 45
 For healing and composure.—But as least
 And mightiest billows ever have confessed
 Thy domination; as the whole vast Sea
 Feels through her lowest depths thy
 sovereignty;
 So shines that countenance with especial
 grace 50
 On them who urge the keel her plains to
 trace

Furrowing its way right onward. The
 most rude,
 Cut off from home and country, may have
 stood—
 Even till long gazing hath bedimmed his
 eye,
 Or the mute rapture ended in a sigh— 55
 Touched by accordance of thy placid
 cheer,
 With some internal lights to memory
 dear,
 Or fancies stealing forth to soothe the
 breast
 Tired with its daily share of earth's
 unrest,—
 Gentle awakenings, visitations meek; 60
 A kindly influence whereof few will speak,
 Though it can wet with tears the hardest
 cheek.

And when thy beauty in the shadowy
 cave
 Is hidden, buried in its monthly grave;
 Then, while the Sailor, 'mid an open sea
 Swept by a favouring wind that leaves
 thought free, 66
 Paces the deck—no star perhaps in sight,
 And nothing save the moving ship's own
 light
 To cheer the long dark hours of vacant
 night—
 Oft with his musings does thy image
 blend, 70
 In his mind's eye thy crescent horns
 ascend,
 And thou art still, O Moon, that SAILOR'S
 FRIEND!

XIII TO THE MOON (RYDAL)

[Composed 1835.—Published 1837.]

QUEEN of the stars!—so gentle, so benign,
 That ancient Fable did to thee assign,
 When darkness creeping o'er thy silver
 brow
 Warned thee these upper regions to
 forego,
 Alternate empire in the shades below—
 A Bard, who, lately near the wide-spread
 sea 6
 Traversed by gleaming ships, looked up
 to thee
 With grateful thoughts, doth now thy
 rising hail
 From the close confines of a shadowy
 vale.
 Glory of night, conspicuous yet serene,
 Nor less attractive when by glimpses
 seen 11
 Through cloudy umbrage, well might that
 fair face,
 And all those attributes of modest grace,

EVENING VOLUNTARIES

In days when Fancy wrought unchecked
by fear,
Down to the green earth fetch thee from
thy sphere,¹⁵
To sit in leafy woods by fountains clear!

O still beloved (for thine, meek Power,
are charms
That fascinate the very Babe in arms,
While he, uplifted towards thee, laughs
outright,
Spreading his little palms in his glad
Mother's sight)²⁰

O still beloved, once worshipped! Time,
that frowns
In his destructive flight on earthly crowns,
Spare thy mild splendour; still those
far-shot beams

Tremble on dancing waves and rippling
streams

With stainless touch, as chaste as when
thy praise²⁵

Was sung by Virgin-choirs in festal lays;
And through dark trials still dost thou
explore

Thy way for increase punctual as of yore,
When teeming Matrons—yielding to rude
faith

In mysteries of birth and life and death
And painful struggle and deliverance—
prayed³¹

Of thee to visit them with lenient aid.
What though the rites be swept away, the
fanes

Extinct that echoed to the votive strains;
Yet thy mild aspect does not, cannot,
cease³⁵

Love to promote and purity and peace;
And Fancy, unproved, even yet may
trace

Faint types of suffering in thy beamless
face.

Then, silent Monitress! let us—not
blind

To worlds unthought of till the searching
mind⁴⁰

Of Science laid them open to mankind—
Told, also, how the voiceless heavens
declare

God's glory; and acknowledging thy
share

In that blest charge; let us—without
offence

To aught of highest, holiest, influence—
Receive whatever good 'tis given thee to
dispende.⁴⁶

May sage and simple, catching with one
eye

The moral intimations of the sky,
Learn from thy course, where'er their
own be taken,

'To look on tempests, and be never
shaken;'⁵⁰

To keep with faithful step the appointed
way

Eclipsing or eclipsed, by night or day,
And from example of thy monthly range

Gently to brook decline and fatal change;
Meek, patient, steadfast, and with loftier
scope,⁵⁵

Than thy revival yields, for gladsome
hope!

XIV

TO LUCCA GIORDANO

[Composed 1846.—Published 1850.]

GIORDANO, verily thy Pencil's skill
Hath here portrayed with Nature's
happiest grace

The fair Endymion couched on Latmos-
hill;

And Dian gazing on the Shepherd's face
In rapture,—yet suspending her embrace,
As not unconscious with what power the
thrill⁶

Of her most timid touch his sleep would
chase,

And, with his sleep, that beauty calm and
still.

Oh may this work have found its last
retreat

Here in a Mountain-bard's secure abode,
One to whom, yet a School-boy, Cynthia
showed¹¹

A face of love which he in love would
greet,

Fixed, by her smile, upon some rocky
seat;

Or lured along where green-wood paths
he trod.

RYDAL MOUNT, 1846.

XV

[Composed 1846.—Published 1850.]

WHO but is pleased to watch the moon on
high

Travelling where she from time to time
enshronds

Her head, and nothing loth her Majesty
Renounces, till among the scattered clouds

One with its kindling edge declares that
soon⁵

Will reappear before the uplifted eye
A Form as bright, as beautiful a moon,

To glide in open prospect through clear
sky.

Pity that such a promise e'er should prove
False in the issue, that yon seeming space

Of sky should be in truth the steadfast
face¹¹

Of a cloud flat and dense, through which
must move

(By transit not unlike man's frequent
doom)

The Wanderer lost in more determined
gloom.

EVENING VOLUNTARIES

XVI

[Composed 1846.—Published 1850.]

WHERE lies the truth? has Man, in
wisdom's creed,
A pitiable doom; for respite brief
A care more anxious, or a heavier grief?
Is he ungrateful, and doth little heed
God's bounty, soon forgotten; or indeed,
Must Man, with labour born, awake to
sorrow
When Flowers rejoice and Larks with
rival speed

Spring from their nests to bid the Sun
good morrow?
They mount for rapture as their songs
proclaim
Warbled in hearing both of earth and
sky;
But o'er the contrast wherefore heave a
sigh?
Like those aspirants let us soar—our aim,
Through life's worst trials, whether shocks
or snares,
A happier, brighter, purer Heaven than
theirs.

POEMS

COMPOSED OR SUGGESTED DURING A TOUR IN THE SUMMER OF 1833¹

Having been prevented by the lateness of the season, in 1831, from visiting Staffa and Iona, the author made these the principal objects of a short tour in the summer of 1833, of which the following Series of Poems is a Memorial. The course pursued was down the Cumberland river Derwent, and to Whitehaven; thence (by the Isle of Man, where a few days were passed) up the Frith of Clyde to Greenock, then to Oban, Staffa, Iona; and back towards England, by Loch Awe, Inverary, Loch Gail-head, Greenock, and through parts of Renfrewshire, Ayrshire, and Dumfries-shire, to Carlisle, and thence up the river Eden, and homewards by Ullswater.

I

ADIEU, Rydalian Laurels! that have
grown
And spread as if ye knew that days
might come
When ye would shelter in a happy home,
On this fair Mount, a Poet of your own,
One who ne'er ventured for a Delphic
crown
To sue the God; but, haunting your green
shade
All seasons through, is humbly pleased to
braid
Ground-flowers, beneath your guardian-
ship, self-sown.
Farewell! no Minstrels now with harp
new-strung
For summer wandering quit their house-
hold bowers;
Yet not for this wants Poesy a tongue
To cheer the Itinerant on whom she
pours
Her spirit, while he crosses lonely moors,
Or musing sits forsaken halls among.

II

WHY should the Enthusiast, journeying
through this Isle,
Repine as if his hour were come too late?
Not unprotected in her mouldering state,

Antiquity salutes him with a smile,
'Mid fruitful fields that ring with jocund
toil,
And pleasure-grounds where Taste, re-
fined Co-mate
Of Truth and Beauty, strives to imitate,
Far as she may, primeval Nature's style.
Fair Land! by Time's parental love made
free,
By Social Order's watchful arms em-
braced;
With unexampled union meet in thee,
For eye and mind, the present and the
past;
With golden prospect for futurity,
If that be revered which ought to
last.

III

THEY called Thee **MERRY ENGLAND**, in
old time;
A happy people won for thee that name
With envy heard in many a distant clime;
And, spite of change, for me thou keep'st
the same
Endearing title, a responsive chime
To the heart's fond belief; though some
there are
Whose sterner judgments deem that word
a snare
For inattentive Fancy, like the lime

¹ The Poems of this Series were for the most part composed in 1833, and published for the first time in the volume of 1835 entitled *Yarrow Revisited, and Other Poems*. Chronological notes are attached only to those pieces to which this observation does not apply. See Nos. XXVII, XLIII, and XLVI.—ED.

ITINERARY POEMS OF 1833

Which, foolish birds are caught with.
Can, I ask,

This face of rural beauty be a mask 10
For discontent, and poverty, and crime;
These spreading towns a cloak for lawless
will?

Forbid it, Heaven!—and MERRY ENGLAND still

Shall be thy rightful name, in prose and
rhyme!

IV

TO THE RIVER GRETA, NEAR KESWICK

GRETA, what fearful listening! when huge
stones

Rumble along thy bed, block after block:
Or, whirling with reiterated shock,
Combat, while darkness aggravates the
groans:

But if thou (like Cocytus from the moans
Heard on his rueful margin) thence wert
named 6

The Mourner, thy true nature was
defamed,

And the habitual murmur that atones
For thy worst rage, forgotten. Oft as
Spring

Decks, on thy sinuous banks, her thou-
sand thrones, 10

Seats of glad instinct and love's carolling,
The concert, for the happy, then may vie
With liveliest peals of birth-day har-
mony:

To a grieved heart the notes are benisons.

V

TO THE RIVER DERWENT

AMONG the mountains were we nursed,
loved Stream!

Thou near the eagle's nest—within brief
sail,

I, of his bold wing floating on the gale,
Where thy deep voice could lull me!

Faint the beam
Of human life when first allowed to
gleam 5

On mortal notice.—Glory of the vale,
Such thy meek outset, with a crown,
though frail,

Kept in perpetual verdure by the steam
Of thy soft breath!—Less vivid wreath
entwined

Nemean victor's brow; less bright was
worn, 10

Meed of some Roman chief—in triumph
borne

With captives chained; and shedding
from his car

The sunset splendours of a finished war
Upon the proud enslavers of mankind!

VI

IN SIGHT OF THE TOWN OF COCKER-
MOUTH

(Where the Author was born, and his Father's
remains are laid.)

A POINT of life between my Parent's dust,
And yours, my buried Little-ones! am I;
And to those graves looking habitually
In kindred quiet I repose my trust.

Death to the innocent is more than just,
And, to the sinner, mercifully bent; 6

So may I hope, if truly I repent
And meekly bear the ills which bear I
must:

And You, my Offspring! that do still
remain,

Yet may outstrip me in the appointed
race, 10

If e'er, through fault of mine, in mutual
pain

We breathed together for a moment's
space,

The wrong, by love provoked, let love
arraign,

And only love keep in your hearts a
place.

VII

ADDRESS FROM THE SPIRIT OF COCKER-
MOUTH CASTLE

'THOU look'st upon me, and dost fondly
think,

Poet! that, stricken as both are by years,
We, differing once so much, are now
Compeers,

Prepared, when each has stood his time,
to sink

Into the dust. Erewhile a sterner link 5
United us; when thou, in boyish play,

Entering my dungeon, didst become a prey
To soul-appalling darkness. Not a blink
Of light was there;—and thus did I, thy
Tutor,

Make thy young thoughts acquainted
with the grave; 10

While thou wert chasing the winged
butterfly

Through my green courts; or climbing, a
bold suitor,

Up to the flowers whose golden progeny
Still round my shattered brow in beauty
wave.'

VIII

NUN'S WELL, BRIGHAM

THE cattle crowding round this beverage
clear

To slake their thirst, with reckless hoofs
have trod

The encircling turf into a barren clod;
Through which the waters creep, then
disappear,

Born to be lost in Derwent flowing near;

Yet o'er the brink, and round the lime-
stone cell
Of the pure spring (they call it the 'Nun's
Well,'
Name that first struck by chance my
startled ear)
A tender Spirit broods—the pensive
Shade
Of ritual honours to this Fountain paid
By hooded Votresses with saintly cheer;
Albeit oft the Virgin-mother mild
Looked down with pity upon eyes be-
guiled
Into the shedding of 'too soft a tear.'

IX

TO A FRIEND

On the banks of the Derwent.

PASTOR and Patriot!—at whose bidding
rise
These modest walls, amid a flock that
need,
For one who comes to watch them and
to feed,
A fixed Abode—keep down presageful
sighs.
Threats, which the unthinking only can
despise,
Perplex the Church; but be thou firm,—
be true
To thy first hope, and this good work
pursue,
Poor as thou art. A welcome sacrifice
Dost Thou prepare, whose sign will be
the smoke
Of thy new hearth; and sooner shall its
wreaths,
Mounting while earth her morning in-
cense breathes,
From wandering fiends of air receive a
yoke,
And straightway cease to aspire, than
God disdain
This humble tribute as ill-timed or vain.

X

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

Landing at the mouth of the Derwent,
Workington.

DEAR to the Loves, and to the Graces
vowed,
The Queen drew back the wimple that
she wore;
And to the throng, that on the Cumbrian
shore
Her landing hailed, how touchingly she
bowed!
And like a Star (that, from a heavy cloud
Of pine-tree foliage poised in air, forth
darts,
When a soft summer gale at evening parts

The gloom that did its loveliness en-
shroud)
She smiled; but Time, the old Saturnian
seer,
Sighed on the wing as her foot pressed
the strand,
With step prelude to a long array
Of woes and degradations hand in hand—
Weeping captivity, and shuddering fear
Stilled by the ensanguined block of
Fotheringay!

XI

STANZAS

SUGGESTED IN A STEAMBOAT OFF SAINT
BEES' HEADS, ON THE COAST OF CUMBER-
LAND

If Life were slumber on a bed of down,
Toil unimposed, vicissitude unknown,
Sad were our lot: no hunter of the hare
Exults like him whose javelin from the lair
Has roused the lion; no one plucks the
rose,
Whose proffered beauty in safe shelter
blows
'Mid a trim garden's summer luxuries,
With joy like his who climbs, on hands
and knees,
For some rare plant, yon Headland of
St. Bees.

This independence upon oar and sail, 10
This new indifference to breeze or gale,
This straight-lined progress, furrowing a
flat lea,
And regular as if locked in certainty—
Depress the hours. Up, Spirit of the
storm!
That Courage may find something to
perform;
That Fortitude, whose blood disdains to
freeze
At Danger's bidding, may confront the
seas,
Firm as the towering Headlands of St.
Bees.

Dread cliff of Baruth! that wild wish may
sleep,
Bold as if men and creatures of the Deep
Breathed the same element; too many
wrecks
Have struck thy sides, too many ghastly
decks
Hast thou looked down upon, that such
a thought
Should here be welcome, and in verse
enwrought:
With thy stern aspect better far agrees 25
Utterance of thanks that we have past
with ease,
As millions thus shall do, the Headlands
of St. Bees.

ITINERARY POEMS OF 1833

Yet, while each useful Art augments her
store,
What boots the gain if Nature should
lose more?
And Wisdom, as she holds a Christian
place³⁰
In man's intelligence sublimed by grace?
When Bega sought of yore the Cumbrian
coast,
Tempestuous winds her holy errand
crossed:
She knelt in prayer—the waves their
wrath appease;
And, from her vow well weighed in Hea-
ven's decrees,³⁵
Rose, where she touched the strand, the
Chantry of St. Bees.

'Cruel of heart were they, bloody of
hand,'
Who in these Wilds then struggled for
command;
The strong were merciless, without hope
the weak;
Till this bright Stranger came, fair as
day-break,⁴⁰
And as a cresset true that darts its length
Of beamy lustre from a tower of strength;
Guiding the mariner through troubled
seas,
And cheering oft his peaceful reveries,
Like the fixed Light that crowns yon
Headland of St. Bees.⁴⁵

To aid the Votaress, miracles believed
Wrought in men's minds, like miracles
achieved;
So piety took root; and Song might tell
What humanizing virtues near her cell
Sprang up, and spread their fragrance
wide around;⁵⁰
How savage bosoms melted at the sound
Of gospel-truth enchained in harmonies
Wafted o'er waves, or creeping through
close trees,
From her religious Mansion of St. Bees.

When her sweet Voice, that instrument
of love,⁵⁵
Was glorified, and took its place, above
The silent stars, among the angelic quire,
Her chantry blazed with sacrilegious fire,
And perished utterly; but her good deeds
Had sown the spot, that witnessed them,
with seeds⁶⁰
Which lay in earth expectant, till a breeze
With quickening impulse answered their
mute pleas,
And lo! a statelier pile, the Abbey of St.
Bees.

There are the naked clothed, the hungry
fed;
And Charity extendeth to the dead⁶⁵

Her intercessions made for the soul's rest
Of tardy penitents; or for the best
Among the good (when love might else
have slept,
Sickened, or died) in pious memory kept:
Thanks to the austere and simple De-
votees,⁷⁰
Who, to that service bound by venial fees,
Keep watch before the altars of St. Bees,

Are not, in sooth, their Requiem's sacred
ties
Woven out of passion's sharpest agonies,
Subdued, composed, and formalized by
art,⁷⁵
To fix a wiser sorrow in the heart?
The prayer for them whose hour is past
away
Says to the Living, profit while ye may!
A little part, and that the worst, he sees
Who thinks that priestly cunning holds
the keys⁸⁰
That best unlock the secrets of St. Bees.

Conscience, the timid being's inmost light,
Hope of the dawn and solace of the night,
Cheers these Recluses with a steady ray
In many an hour when judgment goes
astray.⁸⁵
Ah! scorn not hastily their rule who try
Earth to despise, and flesh to mortify;
Consume with zeal, in winged ecstasies
Of prayer and praise forget their rosaries,
Nor hear the loudest surges of St. Bees.

Yet none so prompt to succour and pro-
tect⁹¹
The forlorn traveller, or sailor wrecked
On the bare coast; nor do they grudge
the boon
Which staff and cockle hat and sandal
shoon
Claim for the pilgrim: and, though chid-
ings sharp⁹⁵
May sometimes greet the strolling min-
strel's harp,
It is not then when, swept with sportive
ease,
It charms a feast-day throng of all de-
grees,
Brightening the archway of revered St.
Bees.

How did the cliffs and echoing hills re-
joice¹⁰⁰
What time the Benedictine Brethren's
voice,
Imploring, or commanding with meet
pride,
Summoned the Chiefs to lay their feuds
aside,
And under one blest ensign serve the
Lord
In Palestine. Advance, indignant Sword!

Flaming till thou from Paynim hands
release 106
That Tomb, dread centre of all sanctities
Nursed in the quiet Abbey of St. Bees.

But look we now to them whose minds
from far
Follow the fortunes which they may not
share. 110

While in Judea Fancy loves to roam,
She helps to make a Holy-land at home:
The Star of Bethlehem from its sphere
invites

To sound the crystal depth of maiden
rights;
And wedded Life, through scriptural
mysteries, 115

Heavenward ascends with all her chari-
ties,
Taught by the hooded Celibates of St.
Bees.

Nor be it e'er forgotten how by skill
Of cloistered Architects, free their souls
to fill

With love of God, throughout the Land
were raised 120
Churches, on whose symbolic beauty
gazed

Peasant and mail-clad Chief with pious
awe;

As at this day men seeing what they saw,
Or the bare wreck of faith's solemnities,
Aspire to more than earthly destinies;
Witness yon Pile that greets us from St.
Bees. 126

Yet more; around those Churches,
gathered Towns
Safe from the feudal Castle's haughty
frowns;

Peaceful abodes, where Justice might up-
hold

Her scales with even hand, and culture
mould 130

The heart to pity, train the mind in care
For rules of life, sound as the Time could
bear.

Nor dost thou fail, thro' abject love of
ease,
Or hindrance raised by sordid purposes,
To bear thy part in this good work, St.
Bees. 135

Who with the ploughshare clove the bar-
ren moors,

And to green meadows changed the
swampy shores?

Thinned the rank woods; and for the
cheerful grange
Made room where wolf and boar were
used to range?

Who taught, and showed by deeds, that
gentler chains 140

Should bind the vassal to his lord's do-
mains?

The thoughtful Monks, intent their God
to please,

For Christ's dear sake, by human sym-
pathies

Poured from the bosom of thy Church,
St. Bees!

But all availed not; by a mandate given
Through lawless will the Brotherhood
was driven 146

Forth from their cells; their ancient House
laid low

In Reformation's sweeping overthrow.
But now once more the local Heart re-
vives,

The inextinguishable Spirit strives. 150
Oh may that Power who hushed the
stormy seas,

And cleared a way for the first Votaries,
Prosper the new-born College of St. Bees!

Alas! the Genius of our age, from Schools
Less humble, draws her lessons, aims, and
rules. 155

To Prowess guided by her insight keen
Matter and Spirit are as one Machine;
Boastful Idolatress of formal skill
She in her own would merge the eternal
will:

Better, if Reason's triumphs match with
these, 160

Her flight before the bold credulities
That furthered the first teaching of St.
Bees.¹

XII

IN THE CHANNEL, BETWEEN THE COAST OF
CUMBERLAND AND THE ISLE OF MAN

RANGING the heights of Scawfell or Black-
comb,

In his lone course the Shepherd oft will
pause,

And strive to fathom the mysterious laws
By which the clouds, arrayed in light or
gloom,

On Mona settle, and the shapes assume
Of all her peaks and ridges. What he
draws 6

From sense, faith, reason, fancy, of the
cause,

He will take with him to the silent tomb.
Or by his fire, a child upon his knee,

Haply the untaught Philosopher may
speak 10

Of the strange sight, nor hide his theory
That satisfies the simple and the meek,
Blest in their pious ignorance, though
weak

To cope with Sages undevoutly free.

¹ See 'Excursion', seventh part; and 'Ecclesiastical Sketches', second part, near the beginning.

ITINERARY POEMS OF 1833

XIII

AT SEA OFF THE ISLE OF MAN

BOLD words affirmed, in days when faith
was strong
And doubts and scruples seldom teased
the brain,
That no adventurer's bark had power to
gain
These shores if he approached them bent
on wrong;
For, suddenly up-conjured from the
Main,
Mists rose to hide the Land—that search,
though long
And eager, might be still pursued in vain.
O Fancy, what an age was *that* for song!
That age, when not by *laws* inanimate,
As men believed, the waters were im-
pelled,
The air controlled, the stars their courses
held;
But element and orb on *acts* did wait
Of Powers endued with visible form, in-
stinct
With will, and to their work by passion
linked.

XIV

DESIRE we past illusions to recall?
To reinstate wild Fancy, would we hide
Truths whose thick veil Science has drawn
aside?

No,—let this Age, high as she may, instal
In her esteem the thirst that wrought
man's fall,
The universe is infinitely wide;
And conquering Reason, if self-glorified,
Can nowhere move uncrossed by some
new wall
Or gulf of mystery, which thou alone,
Imaginative Faith! canst overleap,
In progress toward the fount of Love,—
the throne
Of Power whose ministers the records
keep
Of periods fixed, and laws established, less
Flesh to exalt than prove its nothingness.

XV

ON ENTERING DOUGLAS BAY, ISLE OF MAN
"Dignum laude virum Musa vetat mori."

THE feudal Keep, the bastions of Cohorn,
Even when they rose to check or to repel
Tides of aggressive war, oft served as well
Greedy ambition, armed to treat with
scorn
Just limits; but yon Tower, whose smiles
adorn
This perilous bay, stands clear of all
offence;
Blest work it is of love and innocence,
A Tower of refuge built for the else for-
lorn.

Spare it, ye waves, and lift the mariner,
Struggling for life, into its saving arms!
Spare, too, the human helpers! Do they
stir
'Mid your fierce shock like men afraid to
die?
No; their dread service nerves the heart
it warms,
And they are led by noble HILLARY.¹

XVI

BY THE SEA-SHORE, ISLE OF MAN

WHY stand we gazing on the sparkling
Brine,
With wonder smit by its transparency,
And all-enraptured with its purity?—
Because the untrained, the clear, the
crystalline,
Have ever in them something of benign;
Whether in gem, in water, or in sky,
A sleeping infant's brow, or wakeful eye
Of a young maiden, only not divine.
Scarcely the hand forbears to dip its palm
For beverage drawn as from a mountain-
well.
Temptation centres in the liquid Calm;
Our daily raiment seems no obstacle
To instantaneous plunging in, deep Sea!
And revelling in long embrace with thee.²

XVII

ISLE OF MAN

A YOUTH too certain of his power to wade
On the smooth bottom of this clear bright
sea,
To sight so shallow, with a bather's glee,
Leapt from this rock, and but for timely aid
He, by the alluring element betrayed,
Had perished. Then might Sea-nymphs
(and with sighs
Of self-reproach) have chanted elegies
Bewailing his sad fate, when he was laid
In peaceful earth: for, doubtless, he was
frank,
Utterly in himself devoid of guile;
Knew not the double-dealing of a smile;
Nor aught that makes men's promises a
blank,
Or deadly snare: and He survives to bless
The Power that saved him in his strange
distress.

XVIII

ISLE OF MAN

DID pangs of grief for lenient time too
keen,
Grief that devouring waves had caused—
or guilt
Which they had witnessed, sway the man
who built

¹ See Note, p. 725.

² The sea-water on the coast of the Isle of Man
is singularly pure and beautiful.

This Homestead, placed where nothing
could be seen,
Nought heard, of ocean troubled or
serene?

A tired Ship-soldier on paternal land,
That o'er the channel holds august com-
mand,

The dwelling raised,—a veteran Marine.
He, in disgust, turned from the neigh-
bouring sea

To shun the memory of a listless life 10
That hung between two callings. May
no strife

More hurtful here beset him, doomed
though free,

Self-doomed, to worse inaction, till his eye
Shrink from the daily sight of earth and
sky!

XIX

BY A RETIRED MARINER

A Friend of the Author.

FROM early youth I ploughed the restless
Main,
My mind as restless and as apt to change;
Through every clime and ocean did I
range,

In hope at length a competence to gain;
For poor to Sea I went, and poor I still
remain. 5

Year after year I strove, but strove in vain,
And hardships manifold did I endure,
For Fortune on me never deigned to
smile;

Yet I at last a resting-place have found,
With just enough life's comforts to pro-
cure, 10

In a snug Cove on this our favoured Isle,
A peaceful spot where Nature's gifts
abound;

Then sure I have no reason to complain,
Though poor to Sea I went, and poor I
still remain.

XX

AT BALA-SALA, ISLE OF MAN

Supposed to be written by a Friend.

BROKEN in fortune, but in mind entire
And sound in principle, I seek repose
Where ancient trees this convent-pile en-
close, 1

In ruin beautiful. When vain desire
Intrudes on peace, I pray the eternal Sire
To cast a soul-subduing shade on me, 6
A grey-haired, pensive, thankful Refugee;
A shade—but with some sparks of hea-
venly fire

Once to these cells vouchsafed. And
when I note

The old Tower's brow yellowed as with
the beams 10

Of sunset ever there, albeit streams

¹ Rushen Abbey.

Of stormy weather-stains that semblance
wrought,
I thank the silent Monitor, and say
'Shine so, my aged brow, at all hours of
the day!'

XXI

TYNWALD HILL

ONCE on the top of Tynwald's formal
mound

(Still marked with green turf circles nar-
rowing

Stage above stage) would sit this Island's
King,

The laws to promulgate, enrobed and
crowned;

While, compassing the little mound
around, 5

Degrees and Orders stood, each under
each:

Now, like to things within fate's easiest
reach,

The power is merged, the pomp a grave
has found.

Off with yon cloud, old Snafell! that thine
eye

Over three Realms may take its widest
range; 10

And let, for them, thy fountains utter
strange

Voices, thy winds break forth in pro-
phesy,

If the whole State must suffer mortal
change,

Like Mona's miniature of sovereignty.

XXII

DESPOND who will—I heard a voice ex-
claim,

'Though fierce the assault, and shattered
the defence,

It cannot be that Britain's social frame,
The glorious work of time and provid-
ence,

Before a flying season's rash pretence 5
Should fall; that She, whose virtue put
to shame,

When Europe prostrate lay, the Con-
queror's aim,

Should perish, self-subverted. Black and
dense

The cloud is; but brings that a day of
doom

To Liberty? Her sun is up the while, 10
That orb whose beams round Saxon
Alfred shone:

Then laugh, ye innocent Vales! ye
Streams, sweep on,

Nor let one billow of our heaven-blest Isle
Toss in the fanning wind a humbler
plume.'

ITINERARY POEMS OF 1833

XXIII

IN THE FRITH OF CLYDE, AILSA CRAG

During the Eclipse of the Sun, July 17.

SINCE risen from ocean, ocean to defy,
Appeared the Crag of Ailsa, ne'er did morn
With gleaming lights more gracefully
adorn

His sides, or wreath with mist his fore-
head high:

Now, faintly darkening with the sun's
eclipse,

Still is he seen, in lone sublimity,
Towering above the sea and little ships;
For dwarfs the tallest seem while sailing by,
Each for her haven; with her freight of

Care,

Pleasure, or Grief, and Toil that seldom
looks

Into the secret of to-morrow's fare;
Though poor, yet rich, without the wealth
of books,

Or aught that watchful Love to Nature
owes

For her mute Powers, fixed Forms, or
transient Shows.

XXIV

ON THE FRITH OF CLYDE

In a Steamboat.

ARRAN! a single-crested Teneriffe,
A St. Helena next—in shape and hue,
Varying her crowded peaks and ridges
blue;

Who but must covet a cloud-seat, or skiff
Built for the air, or winged Hippogriff?
That he might fly, where no one could
pursue,

From this dull Monster and her sooty
crew;

And, as a God, light on thy topmost cliff.
Impotent wish! which reason would de-
spise

If the mind knew no union of extremes,
No natural bond between the boldest
schemes

Ambition frames and heart-humilities.
Beneath stern mountains many a soft vale
lies,

And lofty springs give birth to lowly
streams.

XXV

ON REVISITING DUNOLLY CASTLE

See former Series, p. 306.

THE captive Bird was gone;—to cliff or
moor

Perchance had flown, delivered by the
storm;

Or he had pined, and sunk to feed the
worm:

Him found we not: but, climbing a tall
tower,

There saw, impaved with rude fidelity 5
Of art mosaic, in a roofless floor,
An Eagle with stretched wings, but beam-
less eye—

An Eagle that could neither wail nor soar,
Effigy of the Vanished—(shall I dare
To call thee so?) or symbol of fierce deeds
And of the towering courage which past
times

Rejoiced in—take, whate'er thou be, a
share,

Not undeserved, of the memorial rhymes
That animate my way where'er it leads!

XXVI

THE DUNOLLY EAGLE

NOT to the clouds, not to the cliff, he flew;
But when a storm, on sea or mountain
bred,

Came and delivered him, alone he sped
Into the castle-dungeon's darkest mew.

Now near his master's house in open view
He dwells, and hears indignant tempests
howl,

Kennelled and chained. Ye tame domestic
fowl,

Beware of him! Thou, saucy cockatoo,
Look to thy plumage and thy life!—The
roe,

Fleet as the west wind, is for him no
quarry;

Balanced in ether he will never tarry,
Eyeing the sea's blue depths. Poor Bird!
even so

Doth man of brother man a creature make
That clings to slavery for its own sad sake.

XXVII

WRITTEN IN A BLANK LEAF OF
MACPHERSON'S OSSIAN

[Composed 1824.—Published 1827.]

OFt have I caught, upon a fitful breeze,
Fragments of far-off melodies,
With ear not coveting the whole,

A part so charmed the pensive soul:
While a dark storm before my sight 5
Was yielding, on a mountain height

Loose vapours have I watched, that won
Prismatic colours from the sun;
Nor felt a wish that heaven would show
The image of its perfect bow.

What need, then, of these finished Strains?
Away with counterfeit Remains!

An abbey in its lone recess,
A temple of the wilderness,

Wrecks though they be, announce with
feeling

The majesty of honest dealing.
Spirit of Ossian! if imboud

In language thou may'st yet be found,
If aught (intrusted to the pen

Or floating on the tongues of men, 20

XXVIII

CAVE OF STAFFA

Albeit shattered and impaired)
Subsist thy dignity to guard,
In concert with memorial claim
Of old grey stone, and high-born name
That cleaves to rock or pillared cave 25
Where moans the blast, or beats the wave,
Let Truth, stern arbitress of all,
Interpret that Original,
And for presumptuous wrongs atone;—
Authentic words be given, or none! 30

Time is not blind;—yet He, who spares
Pyramid pointing to the stars,
Hath preyed with ruthless appetite
On all that marked the primal flight
Of the poetic ecstasy 35
Into the land of mystery.
No tongue is able to rehearse
One measure, Orpheus! of thy verse;
Musæus, stationed with his lyre
Supreme among the Elysian quire, 40
Is, for the dwellers upon earth,
Mute as a lark ere morning's birth.
Why grieve for these, though past away
The music, and extinct the lay?
When thousands, by severer doom, 45
Fall early to the silent tomb
Have sunk, at Nature's call; or strayed
From hope and promise, self-betrayed;
The garland withering on their brows;
Stung with remorse for broken vows; 50
Frantic—else how might they rejoice?
And friendless, by their own sad choice!

Hail, Bards of mightier grasp! on you
I chiefly call, the chosen Few,
Who cast not off the acknowledged guide,
Who faltered not, nor turned aside; 56
Whose lofty genius could survive
Privation, under sorrow thrive;
In whom the fiery Muse revered
The symbol of a snow-white beard, 60
Bedewed with meditative tears
Dropped from the lenient cloud of years.

Brothers in soul! though distant times
Produced you nursed in various climes,
Ye, when the orb of life had waned, 65
A plenitude of love retained;
Hence, while in you each sad regret
By corresponding hope was met,
Ye lingered among human kind,
Sweet voices for the passing wind; 70
Departing sunbeams, loth to stop,
Though smiling on the last hill-top!
Such to the tender-hearted maid
Even ere her joys begin to fade;
Such, haply, to the rugged chief 75
By fortune crushed, or tamed by grief;
Appears, on Morven's lonely shore,
Dim-gleaming through imperfect lore,
The Son of Fingal; such was blind
Mæonides of ampler mind; 80
Such Milton, to the fountain-head
Of glory by Urania led!

We saw, but surely, in the motley crowd,
Not One of us has felt the far-famed sight;
How *could* we feel it? each the other's
blight,

Hurried and hurrying, volatile and loud.
O for those motions only that invite 5
The Ghost of Fingal to his tuneful Cave
By the breeze entered, and wave after wave
Softly embosoming the timid light!
And by *one* Votary who at will might
stand 9

Gazing and take into his mind and heart,
With undistracted reverence, the effect
Of those proportions where the almighty
hand
That made the worlds, the sovereign
Architect,
Has deigned to work as if with human
Art!

XXIX

CAVE OF STAFFA

After the Crowd had departed.

THANKS for the lessons of this Spot—fit
school
For the presumptuous thoughts that
would assign
Mechanic laws to agency divine;
And, measuring heaven by earth, would
overrule
Infinite Power. The pillared vestibule, 5
Expanding yet precise, the roof embowed,
Might seem designed to humble man,
when proud
Of his best workmanship by plan and tool.
Down-bearing with his whole Atlantic
weight
Of tide and tempest on the Structure's
base, 10
And flashing to that Structure's topmost
height,
Ocean has proved its strength, and of its
grace
In calms is conscious, finding for his
freight
Of softest music some responsive place.

XXX

CAVE OF STAFFA

YE shadowy Beings, that have rights and
claims
In every cell of Fingal's mystic Grot,
Where are ye? Driven or venturing to
the spot,
Our fathers glimpses caught of your thin
Frames,
And, by your mien and bearing, knew
your names; 5
And they could hear *his* ghostly song
who trod
Earth, till the flesh lay on him like a load,

ITINERARY POEMS OF 1833

While he struck his desolate harp without
hopes or aims.

Vanished ye are, but subject to recall;
Why keep we else the instincts whose
dread law
Ruled here of yore, till what men felt¹⁰
they saw,

Not by black arts but magic natural!
If eyes be still sworn vassals of belief,
Yon light shapes forth a Bard, that shade
a Chief.

XXXI

FLOWERS ON THE TOP OF THE PILLARS AT
THE ENTRANCE OF THE CAVE

HOPE smiled when your nativity was cast,
Children of Summer! Ye fresh Flowers
that brave

What Summer here escapes not, the fierce
wave,

And whole artillery of the western blast,
Battering the Temple's front, its long-
drawn nave⁵

Smiting, as if each moment were their last.
But ye, bright Flowers, on frieze and
architrave

Survive, and once again the Pile stands
fast:

Calm as the Universe, from specular
towers

Of heaven contemplated by Spirits pure
With mute astonishment, it stands sus-
tained¹¹

Through every part in symmetry, to en-
dure,

Unhurt, the assault of Time with all his
hours,

As the supreme Artificer ordained.

XXXII

IONA

ON to Iona!—What can she afford
To us save matter for a thoughtful sigh,
Heaved over ruin with stability
In urgent contrast? To diffuse the WORD
(Thy Paramount, mighty Nature! and
Time's Lord)⁵

Her Temples rose, 'mid pagan gloom; but
why,

Even for a moment, has our verse de-
plored

Their wrongs, since they fulfilled their
destiny?

And when, subjected to a common doom
Of mutability, those far-famed Piles¹⁰
Shall disappear from both the sister Isles,
Iona's Saints, forgetting not past days,
Garlands shall wear of amaranthine
bloom,

While heaven's vast sea of voices chants
their praise.

XXXIII

IONA

Upon Landing.

How sad a welcome! To each voyager
Some ragged child holds up for sale a
store

Of wave-worn pebbles, pleading on the
shore

Where once came monk and nun with
gentle stir,

Blessings to give, news ask, or suit prefer.
Yet is yon neat trim church a grateful
speck⁶

Of novelty amid the sacred wreck
Strewn far and wide. Think, proud
Philosopher!

Fallen though she be, this Glory of the west,
Still on her sons the beams of mercy
shine;¹⁰

And 'hopes, perhaps more heavenly
bright than thine,

A grace by thee unsought and unpossessed,
A faith more fixed, a rapture more divine

Shall gild their passage to eternal rest.'

XXXIV

THE BLACK STONES OF IONA

[See Martin's *Voyage among the Western Isles*.]

HERE on their knees men swore: the
stones were black,

Black in the people's minds and words,
yet they

Were at that time, as now, in colour grey.
But what is colour, if upon the rack

Of conscience souls are placed by deeds
that lack⁵

Concord with oaths? What differ night
and day

Then, when before the Perjured on his way
Hell opens, and the heavens in vengeance
crack

Above his head uplifted in vain prayer
To Saint, or Fiend, or to the Godhead
whom¹⁰

He had insulted—Peasant, King, or
Thane?

Fly where the culprit may, guilt meets a
doom;

And, from invisible worlds at need laid
bare,

Come links for social order's awful chain.

XXXV

HOMEWARD we turn. Isle of Columba's
Cell,

Where Christian piety's soul-cheering
spark

(Kindled from Heaven between the light
and dark

Of time) shone like the morning-star,
farewell!—

And fare thee well, to Fancy visible,⁵

Remote St. Kilda, lone and loved sea-
mark
For many a voyage made in her swift
bark,
When with more hues than in the rainbow
dwell

Thou a mysterious intercourse dost hold,
Extracting from clear skies and air serene,
And out of sun-bright waves, a lucid veil,
That thickens, spreads, and, mingling fold
with fold,
Makes known, when thou no longer canst
be seen,
Thy whereabouts, to warn the approaching
sail.

XXXVI

GREENOCK

Per me si va nella Città dolente.

WE have not passed into a doleful City,
We who were led to-day down a grim dell,
By some too boldly named 'the Jaws of
Hell.'

Where be the wretched ones, the sights
for pity?

These crowded streets resound no plain-
tive ditty:—

As from the hive where bees in summer
dwell,

Sorrow seems here excluded; and that
knell,

It neither damps the gay, nor checks the
witty.

Alas! too busy Rival of old Tyre,
Whose merchants Princes were, whose
decks were thrones;

Soon may the punctual sea in vain respire
To serve thy need, in union with that
Clyde

Whose nursling current brawls o'er mossy
stones,

The poor, the lonely, herdsman's joy and
pride.

XXXVII

'THERE!' said a Stripling, pointing with
meet pride

Towards a low roof with green trees half
concealed,

'Is Mosgiel Farm; and that's the very field
Where Burns ploughed up the Daisy.'

Far and wide
A plain below stretched seaward, while,
descried

Above sea-clouds, the Peaks of Arran
rose;

And, by that simple notice, the repose
Of earth, sky, sea, and air, was vivified.

Beneath 'the random bield of clod or
stone'

Myriads of daisies have shone forth in
flower

Near the lark's nest, and in their natural
hour

Have passed away; less happy than the
One

That, by the unwilling ploughshare, died
to prove

The tender charm of poetry and love.

XXXVIII

THE RIVER EDEN, CUMBERLAND

EDEN! till now thy beauty had I viewed
By glimpses only, and confess with shame

Tha' verse of mine, whate'er its varying
mood,

Repeats but once the sound of thy sweet
name:

Yet fetched from Paradise that honour
came,

Rightfully borne; for Nature gives thee
flowers

That have no rivals among British bowers;
And thy bold rocks are worthy of their
fame.

Measuring thy course, fair Stream! at
length I pay

To my life's neighbour dues of neighbour-
hood;

But I have traced thee on thy winding
way

With pleasure sometimes by this thought
restrained—

For things far off we toil, while many a
good

Not sought, because too near, is never
gained.

XXXIX

MONUMENT OF MRS. HOWARD

(by Nollekens).

In Wetheral Church, near Corby, on the banks
of the Eden.

STRETCHED on the dying Mother's lap,
lies dead

Her new-born Babe; dire ending of bright
hope!

But Sculpture here, with the divinest scope
Of luminous faith, heavenward hath
raised that head

So patiently; and through one hand has
spread

A touch so tender for the insensate
Child—

(Earth's lingering love to parting recon-
ciled,

Brief parting, for the spirit is all but
fled)—

That we, who contemplate the turns of life
Through this still medium, are consoled
and cheered;

Feel with the Mother, think the severed
Wife

Is less to be lamented than revered;
And own that Art, triumphant over strife

And pain, hath powers to Eternity en-
deared.

ITINERARY POEMS OF 1833

XL

SUGGESTED BY THE FOREGOING

TRANQUILITY! the sovereign aim wert thou

In heathen schools of philosophic lore;
Heart-stricken by stern destiny of yore
The Tragic Muse thee served with thoughtful vow;

And what of hope Elysium could allow
Was fondly seized by Sculpture, to restore
Peace to the Mourner. But when He who wore

The crown of thorns around his bleeding brow

Warmed our sad being with celestial light,
Then Arts, which still had drawn a softening grace

From shadowy fountains of the Infinite,
Communed with that Idea face to face:
And move around it now as planets run,
Each in its orbit round the central Sun.

XLI

NUNNERY

THE floods are roused, and will not soon be weary;

Down from the Pennine Alps' how fiercely sweeps

CROGLIN, the stately Eden's tributary!
He raves, or through some moody passage creeps

Plotting new mischief—out again he leaps
Into broad light, and sends, through regions airy,

That voice which soothed the Nuns while on the steep

They knelt in prayer, or sang to blissful Mary.

That union ceased: then, cleaving easy walks

Through crags, and smoothing paths beset with danger,

Came studious Taste; and many a pensive stranger

Dreams on the banks, and to the river talks.
What change shall happen next to Nunnery Dell?

Canal, and Viaduct, and Railway, tell!

XLII

STEAMBOATS, VIADUCTS, AND RAILWAYS

MOTIONS and Means, on land and sea at war

With old poetic feeling, not for this,
Shall ye, by Poets even, be judged amiss!
Nor shall your presence, howsoever it mar
The loveliness of Nature, prove a bar
To the Mind's gaining that prophetic sense
Of future change, that point of vision, whence

May be discovered what in soul ye are.

¹ The chain of Crossfell.

In spite of all that beauty may disown
In your harsh features, Nature doth embrace

Her lawful offspring in Man's art; and Time,

Pleased with your triumphs o'er his brother Space,

Accepts from your bold hands the profured crown

Of hope, and smiles on you with cheer sublime.

XLIII

THE MONUMENT COMMONLY CALLED LONG
MEG AND HER DAUGHTERS, NEAR THE
RIVER EDEN

[Composed 1821.—Published 1822; ² ed. 1827.]

A WEIGHT of awe, not easy to be borne,
Fell suddenly upon my Spirit—cast
From the dread bosom of the unknown past,

When first I saw that family forlorn.
Speak Thou, whose massy strength and stature scorn

The power of years—pre-eminent, and placed

Apart, to overlook the circle vast—
Speak, Giant-mother! tell it to the Morn

While she dispels the cumbrous shades of Night;

Let the Moon hear, emerging from a cloud;

At whose behest uprose on British ground
That Sisterhood, in hieroglyphic round

Forth-shadowing, some have deemed, the infinite

The inviolable God, that tames the proud!

XLIV

LOWTHER

LOWTHER! in thy majestic Pile are seen
Cathedral pomp and grace, in apt accord

With the baronial castle's sterner mien;
Union significant of God adored,

And charters won and guarded by the sword

Of ancient honour; whence that goodly state

Of polity which wise men venerate,
And will maintain, if God his help afford.

Hourly the democratic torrent swells;
For airy promises and hopes suborned

The strength of backward-looking thoughts is scorned.

Fall if ye must, ye Towers and Pinnacles,
With what ye symbolise; authentic Story

Will say, Ye disappeared with England's Glory!

² In the little book entitled *A Description of the Scenery of the Lakes, etc.*—Ed.

³ See Note, p. 725.

XLV

TO THE EARL OF LONSDALE

'Magistratus indicat vitrum.'

LONSDALE! it were unworthy of a Guest,
Whose heart with gratitude to thee inclines,
If he should speak, by fancy touched, of
signs

On thy Abode harmoniously imprest,
Yet be unmoved with wishes to attest 5
How in thy mind and moral frame agree
Fortitude, and that Christian Charity
Which, filling, consecrates the human
breast.

And if the Motto on thy 'scutcheon teach
With truth, 'THE MAGISTRACY SHOWS
THE MAN;' 10

That searching test thy public course has
stood;

As will be owned alike by bad and good,
Soon as the measuring of life's little span
Shall place thy virtues out of Envy's reach.¹

XLVI

THE SOMNAMBULIST

[Composed before 1827 (1807-8?).—Published
1835.]

LIST, ye who pass by Lyulph's Tower²
At eve; how softly then

Doth Aira-force, that torrent hoarse,
Speak from the woody glen!
Fit music for a solemn vale! 5

And holier seems the ground
To him who catches on the gale
The spirit of a mournful tale,
Embodied in the sound.

Not far from that fair site whereon 10

The Pleasure-house is reared,
As story says, in antique days
A stern-browed house appeared;
Foil to a Jewel rich in light
There set, and guarded well; 15
Cage for a Bird of plumage bright,
Sweet-voiced, nor wishing for a flight
Beyond her native dell.

To win this bright Bird from her cage,

To make this Gem their own, 20
Came Barons bold, with store of gold,
And Knights of high renown;
But one She prized, and only one;

Sir Eglamore was he;
Full happy season, when was known, 25
Ye Dales and Hills! to you alone
Their mutual loyalty—

Known chiefly, Aira! to thy glen,
Thy brook, and bowers of holly;
Where Passion caught what Nature taught,
That all but love is folly; 31

¹ See Note, p. 725.

² A pleasure-house built by the late Duke of Norfolk upon the banks of Ullswater. FORCE is the word used in the Lake District for Waterfall.

Where Fact with Fancy stooped to play;

Doubt came not, nor regret—
To trouble hours that winged their way,
As if through an immortal day 35
Whose sun could never set.

But in old times Love dwelt not long
Sequestered with repose;
Best thro' the fire of chaste desire,
Fanned by the breath of foes. 40
'A conquering lance is beauty's test,
And proves the Lover true;'
So spake Sir Eglamore, and pressed
The drooping Emma to his breast,
And looked a blind adieu. 45

They parted.—Well with him it fared
Through wide-spread regions errant;
A knight of proof in love's behoof,
The thirst of fame his warrant:
And She her happiness can build 50
On woman's quiet hours;
Though faint, compared with spear and
shield,

The solace beads and masses yield,
And needlework and flowers.

Yet blest was Emma when she heard 55
Her Champion's praise recounted;
Though brain would swim, and eyes grow
dim,

And high her blushes mounted;
Or when a bold heroic lay
She warbled from full heart; 60
Delightful blossoms for the May
Of absence! but they will not stay,
Born only to depart.

Hope wanes with her, while lustre fills
Whatever path he chooses; 65
As if his orb, that owns no curb,
Received the light hers loses.
He comes not back; an ampler space
Requires for nobler deeds;
He ranges on from place to place, 70
Till of his doings is no trace,
But what her fancy breeds.

His fame may spread, but in the past
Her spirit finds its centre;
Clear sight She has of what he was, 75
And that would now content her.
'Still is he my devoted Knight?'
The tear in answer flows;
Month falls on month with heavier weight,
Day sickens round her, and the night 80
Is empty of repose.

In sleep She sometimes walked abroad,
Deep sighs with quick words blending,
Like that pale Queen whose hands are seen
With fancied spots contending; 85
But she is innocent of blood,—
The moon is not more pure
That shines aloft, while through the wood
She thrids her way, the sounding Flood
Her melancholy lure! 90

ITINERARY POEMS OF 1833

While mid the fern-brake sleeps the doe,
And owls alone are waking,
In white arrayed, glides on the Maid
The downward pathway taking,
That leads her to the torrent's side 95
And to a holly bower;
By whom on this still night descried?
By whom in that lone place espied?
By thee, Sir Eglamore!

A wandering Ghost, so thinks the Knight,
His coming step has thwarted, 101
Beneath the boughs that heard their vows,
Within whose shade they parted.
Hush, hush, the busy Sleeper see!
Perplexed her fingers seem, 105
As if they from the holly tree
Green twigs would pluck, as rapidly
Flung from her to the stream.

What means the Spectre? Why intent
To violate the Tree, 110
Thought Eglamore, by which I swore
Unfading constancy?
Here am I, and to-morrow's sun,
To her I left, shall prove
That bliss is ne'er so surely won 115
As when a circuit has been run
Of valour, truth, and love.

So from the spot whereon he stood,
He moved with stealthy pace;
And, drawing nigh, with his living eye,
He recognised the face; 121
And whispers caught, and speeches small,
Some to the green-leaved tree,
Some muttered to the torrent-fall;—
'Roar on, and bring him with thy call;
I heard, and so may He!' 126

Soul-shattered was the Knight, nor knew
If Emma's Ghost it were,
Or boding Shade, or if the Maid
Her very self stood there. 130
He touched; what followed who shall tell?
The soft touch snapped the thread
Of slumber—shrieking back she fell,
And the Stream whirled her down the dell
Along its foaming bed. 135

In plunged the Knight!—when on firm
ground
The rescued Maiden lay,
Her eyes grew bright with blissful light,
Confusion passed away;
She heard, ere to the throne of grace 140
Her faithful Spirit flew,
His voice—beheld his speaking face;
And, dying, from his own embrace,
She felt that he was true.

So was he reconciled to life: 145
Brief words may speak the rest;
Within the dell he built a cell,
And there was Sorrow's guest;

In hermits' weeds repose he found,
From vain temptations free; 150
Beside the torrent dwelling—bound
By one deep heart-controlling sound,
And awed to piety.

Wild stream of Aira, hold thy course,
Nor fear memorial lays, 155
Where clouds that spread in solemn shade,
Are edged with golden rays!
Dear art thou to the light of heaven,
Though minister of sorrow;
Sweet is thy voice at pensive even; 160
And thou, in lovers' hearts forgiven,
Shalt take thy place with Yarrow!

XLVII

TO CORDELIA M——
Hallsteads, Ullswater.

Nor in the mines beyond the western main,
You say, Cordelia, was the metal sought,
Which a fine skill, of Indian growth, has
wrought
Into this flexible yet faithful Chain;
Nor is it silver of romantic Spain; 5
But from our loved Helvellyn's depths
was brought,
Our own domestic mountain. Thing and
thought
Mix strangely; trifles light, and partly vain,
Can prop, as you have learnt, our nobler
being:
Yes, Lady, while about your neck is
wound 10
(Your casual glance oft meeting) this
bright cord,
What witchery, for pure gifts of inward
seeing,
Lurks in it, Memory's Helper, Fancy's
Lord,
For precious tremblings in your bosom
found!

XLVIII

Most sweet it is with unuplifted eyes
To pace the ground, if path be there or
none,
While a fair region round the traveller lies
Which he forbears again to look upon;
Pleased rather with some soft ideal scene,
The work of Fancy, or some happy tone
Of meditation, slipping in between 7
The beauty coming and the beauty gone.
If Thought and Love desert us, from that
day
Let us break off all commerce with the
Muse: 10
With Thought and Love companions of
our way,
Whate'er the senses take or may refuse,
The Mind's internal heaven shall shed
her dews
Of inspiration on the humblest lay.

POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION

I

EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY

[Composed 1798.—Published 1798.]

'Why, William, on that old grey stone,
Thus for the length of half a day,
Why, William, sit you thus alone,
And dream your time away?

'Where are your books?—that light be-
queathed
To Beings else forlorn and blind!
Up! up! and drink the spirit breathed
From dead men to their kind.

'You look round on your Mother Earth,
As if she for no purpose bore you;
As if you were her first-born birth,
And none had lived before you!'

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,
When life was sweet, I knew not why,
To me my good friend Matthew spake,
And thus I made reply:

'The eye—it cannot choose but see;
We cannot bid the ear be still;
Our bodies feel, where'er they be,
Against or with our will.

'Nor less I deem that there are Powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.

'Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?

'—Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
Conversing as I may,
I sit upon this old grey stone,
And dream my time away.'

II

THE TABLES TURNED

AN EVENING SCENE ON THE SAME SUBJECT

[Composed 1798.—Published 1798.]

Up! up! my Friend, and quit your books;
Or surely you'll grow double:
Up! up! my Friend, and clear your looks;
Why all this toil and trouble?

The sun, above the mountain's head,
A freshening lustre mellow
Through all the long green fields has
spread,
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:
Come, hear the woodland linnet,
How sweet his music! on my life,
There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher:
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your Teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless—
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
Our meddling intellect
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of
things:—
We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;
Close up those barren leaves;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

III

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING

[Composed 1798.—Published 1798.]

I HEARD a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant
thoughts

Bring sad thoughts to the mind.
To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that green
bower,
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played,
Their thoughts I cannot measure:—
But the least motion which they made,
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION

If this belief from heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?

IV

A CHARACTER

[Composed probably September or October, 1800.
—Published 1800.]

I MARVEL how Nature could ever find
space

For so many strange contrasts in one
human face:

There's thought and no thought, and
there's paleness and bloom
And bustle and sluggishness, pleasure
and gloom.

There's weakness, and strength both
redundant and vain;

Such strength as, if ever affliction and pain
Could pierce through a temper that's soft
to disease,

Would be rational peace—a philosopher's
ease.

There's indifference, alike when he fails
or succeeds,

And attention full ten times as much as
there needs;

Pride where there's no envy, there's so
much of joy;

And mildness, and spirit both forward
and coy.

There's freedom, and sometimes a diffi-
dent stare

Of shame scarcely seeming to know that
she's there,

There's virtue, the title it surely may
claim,

Yet wants heaven knows what to be
worthy the name.

This picture from nature may seem to
depart,

Yet the Man would at once run away
with your heart;

And I for five centuries right gladly
would be

Such an odd such a kind happy creature
as he.

V

TO MY SISTER

[Composed 1798.—Published 1798.]

It is the first mild day of March:
Each minute sweeter than before,
The redbreast sings from the tall larch
That stands beside our door.

There is a blessing in the air,
Which seems a sense of joy to yield
To the bare trees, and mountains bare,
And grass in the green field.

My sister! ('tis a wish of mine
Now that our morning meal
Make haste, your morning tea
Come forth and feel the sun.

Edward will come with you;
Put on with speed your woo
And bring no book: for this
We'll give to idleness.

No joyless forms shall regul
Our living calendar:
We from to-day, my Friend,
The opening of the year.

Love, now a universal birth,
From heart to heart is stealing,
From earth to man, from man to earth:
—It is the hour of feeling.

One moment now may give us more 25
Than years of toiling reason:
Our minds shall drink at every pore
The spirit of the season.

Some silent laws our hearts will make,
Which they shall long obey: 30
We for the year to come may take
Our temper from to-day.

And from the blessed power that rolls
About, below, above,
We'll frame the measure of our souls: 35
They shall be tuned to love.

Then come, my Sister! come, I pray,
With speed put on your woodland dress;
And bring no book: for this one day 40
We'll give to idleness.

VI

SIMON LEE

THE OLD HUNTSMAN

With an incident in which he was concerned.
[Composed 1798.—Published 1798.]

In the sweet shire of Cardigan,
Not far from pleasant Ivor-hall,
An old Man dwells, a little man,—
'Tis said he once was tall. 5
Full five-and-thirty years he lived
A running huntsman merry;
And still the centre of his cheek
Is red as a ripe cherry.

No man like him the horn could sound,
And hill and valley rang with glee 10
When Echo banded, round and round,
The halloo of Simon Lee.

In those proud days, he little cared 5
For husbandry or tillage;
To blither tasks did Simon rouse 15
The sleepers of the village.

POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION

He all the country could outrun,
Could leave both man and horse behind;
And often, ere the chase was done,
He reeled, and was stone-blind. 20

And still there's something in the world
At which his heart rejoices;
For when the chiming hounds are out,
He dearly loves their voices!

But, oh the heavy change!—bereft 25
Of health, strength, friends, and kindred,
see!

Old Simon to the world is left
In liveried poverty.
His Master's dead,—and no one now
Dwells in the Hall of Ivor;
Men, dogs, and horses, all are dead; 30
He is the sole survivor.

And he is lean and he is sick;
His body, dwindled and awry,
Rests upon ankles swollen and thick; 35
His legs are thin and dry.

One prop he has, and only one,
His wife, an aged woman,
Lives with him, near the waterfall,
Upon the village Common. 40

Beside their moss-grown hut of clay,
Not twenty paces from the door,
A scrap of land they have, but they
Are poorest of the poor.

This scrap of land he from the heath 45
Enclosed when he was stronger;
But what to them avails the land
Which he can till no longer?

Oft, working by her Husband's side,
Ruth does what Simon cannot do;
For she, with scanty cause for pride,
Is stouter of the two. 50

And, though you with your utmost skill
From labour could not wean them,
'Tis little, very little—all 55
That they can do between them.

Few months of life has he in store
As he to you will tell,
For still, the more he works, the more
Do his weak ankles swell. 60

My gentle Reader, I perceive
How patiently you've waited,
And now I fear that you expect
Some tale will be related.

O Reader! had you in your mind
Such stores as silent thought can bring,
O gentle Reader! you would find
A tale in every thing. 65

What more I have to say is short,
And you must kindly take it:
It is no tale; but, should you think,
Perhaps a tale you'll make it. 70

One summer-day I chanced to see
This old Man doing all he could
To unearth the root of an old tree,
A stump of rotten wood. 75

The mattock tottered in his hand;
So vain was his endeavour,
That at the root of the old tree
He might have worked for ever. 80

'You're overtasked,' good Simon Lee,
Give me your tool,' to him I said;
And at the word right gladly he
Received my proffered aid.
I struck, and with a single blow 85
The tangled root I severed,
At which the poor old Man so long
And vainly had endeavoured.

The tears into his eyes were brought,
And thanks and praises seemed to run
So fast out of his heart, I thought 90
They never would have done.
—I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
With coldness still returning;
Alas! the gratitude of men 95
Hath oftener left me mourning.

VII

WRITTEN IN GERMANY

ON ONE OF THE COLDEST DAYS OF THE CENTURY

[Composed 1799.—Published 1800.]

The Reader must be apprised that the Stoves in
North Germany generally have the impression
of a galloping horse upon them, this being part
of the Brunswick Arms.

A PLAGUE on your languages, German
and Norse!

Let me have the song of the kettle;
And the tongs and the poker, instead of
that horse

That gallops away with such fury and
force

On this dreary dull plate of black metal.

See that Fly,—a disconsolate creature! 6
perhaps

A child of the field or the grove;
And, sorrow for him! the dull treacherous
heat

Has seduced the poor fool from his winter
retreat,

And he creeps to the edge of my stove. 10

Alas! how he fumbles about the domains
Which this comfortless oven environ!

He cannot find out in what track he must
crawl,

Now back to the tiles, then in search of
the wall,

And now on the brink of the iron. 15

Stock-still there he stands like a traveller
bemazed:

The best of his skill he has tried;
His feelers, methinks, I can see him put
forth

To the east and the west, to the south
and the north, 20

But he finds neither guide-post nor guide.

POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION

His spindles sink under him, foot, leg,
and thigh! 21
His eyesight and hearing are lost;
Between life and death his blood freezes
and thaws;
And his two pretty pinions of blue dusky
gauze
Are glued to his sides by the frost. 25
No brother, no mate has he near him—
while I
Can draw warmth from the cheek of my
Love;
As blest and as glad, in this desolate
gloom,
As if green summer grass were the floor
of my room,
And woodbines were hanging above. 30
Yet, God is my witness, thou small help-
less Thing!
Thy life I would gladly sustain
Till summer come up from the south, and
with crowds
Of thy brethren a march thou shouldst
sound through the clouds,
And back to the forests again!

VIII

A POET'S EPITAPH

[Composed 1799.—Published 1800.]

ART thou a Statist in the van
Of public conflicts trained and bred?
—First learn to love one living man;
Then may'st thou think upon the dead.
A Lawyer art thou?—draw not nigh! 5
Go, carry to some fitter place
The keenness of that practised eye,
The hardness of that sallow face.
Art thou a Man of purple cheer?
A rosy Man, right plump to see?
Approach; yet, Doctor, not too near,
This grave no cushion is for thee.
Or art thou one of gallant pride,
A Soldier and no man of chaff?
Welcome!—but lay thy sword aside,
And lean upon a peasant's staff. 15
Physician art thou?—one, all eyes,
Philosopher!—a fingering slave,
One that would peep and botanize
Upon his mother's grave?
Wrapt closely in thy sensual fleece,
O turn aside,—and take, I pray,
That he below may rest in peace,
Thy ever-windling soul, away!
A Moralist perchance appears; 25
Led, Heaven knows how! to this poor
sod:
And he has neither eyes nor ears;
Himself his world, and his own God;

One to whose smooth-rubbed soul can
cling
Nor form, nor feeling, great or small;
A reasoning, self-sufficing thing, 31
An intellectual All-in-all!
Shut close the door; press down the latch;
Sleep in thy intellectual crust;
Nor lose ten tickings of thy watch 35
Near this unprofitable dust
But who is He, with modest looks,
And clad in homely russet brown?
He murmurs near the running brooks
A music sweeter than their own. 40
He is retired as noontide dew,
Or fountain in a noon-day grove;
And you must love him, ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love.

The outward shows of sky and earth, 45
Of hill and valley, he has viewed;
And impulses of deeper birth
Have come to him in solitude.

In common things that round us lie
Some random truths he can impart,—
The harvest of a quiet eye 51
That broods and sleeps on his own heart.

But he is weak; both Man and Boy,
Hath been an idler in the land;
Contented if he might enjoy 55
The things which others understand.
—Come hither in thy hour of strength;
Come, weak as is a breaking wave!
Here stretch thy body at full length;
Or build thy house upon this grave. 60

IX

TO THE DAISY

[Composed 1802.—Published 1807.]

BRIGHT Flower! whose home is every-
where,
Bold in maternal Nature's care,
And all the long year through the heir
Of joy and sorrow;
Methinks that there abides in thee 5
Some concord with humanity,
Given to no other flower I see
The forest thorough!
Is it that Man is soon deprest?
A thoughtless Thing! who, once unblest, 20
Does little on his memory rest, 11
Or on his reason,
And Thou wouldst teach him how to find
A shelter under every wind,
A hope for times that are unkind 15
And every season?
Thou wander'st the wide world about,
Unchecked by pride or scrupulous doubt
With friends to greet thee, or without,
Yet pleased and willing; 20

POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION

Meek, yielding to the occasion's call,
And all things suffering from all,
Thy function apostolical
In peace fulfilling.

X

MATTHEW

[Composed 1799.—Published 1800.]

In the School of ——— is a tablet, on which
are inscribed, in gilt letters, the Names of the
several persons who have been Schoolmasters
there since the foundation of the School, with
the time at which they entered upon and quitted
their office. Opposite to one of those Names
the Author wrote the following lines.

If Nature, for a favourite child,
In thee hath tempered so her clay,
That every hour thy heart runs wild,
Yet never once doth go astray,

Read o'er these lines; and then review 5
This tablet, that thus humbly rears
In such diversity of hue
Its history of two hundred years.

—When through this little wreck of fame,
Cipher and syllable! thine eye 10
Has travelled down to Matthew's name,
Pause with no common sympathy.

And if a sleeping tear should wake,
Then be it neither checked nor stayed:
For Matthew a request I make 15
Which for himself he had not made.

Poor Matthew, all his frolics o'er,
Is silent as a standing pool;
Far from the chimney's merry roar,
And murmur of the village school. 20

The sighs which Matthew heaved were
sighs
Of one tired out with fun and madness;
The tears which came to Matthew's eyes
Were tears of light, the dew of gladness.

Yet sometimes, when the secret cup 25
Of still and serious thought went round,
It seemed as if he drank it up—
He felt with spirit so profound.

—Thou soul of God's best earthly mould!
Thou happy Soul! and can it be 30
That these two words of glittering gold
Are all that must remain of thee?

XI

THE TWO APRIL MORNINGS

[Composed 1799.—Published 1800.]

We walked along, while bright and red
Uprose the morning sun;
And Matthew stopped, he looked, and
said,
'The will of God be done!'

A village schoolmaster was he, 5
With hair of glittering grey;
As blithe a man as you could see
On a spring holiday.

And on that morning, through the grass, 10
And by the steaming rills,
We travelled merrily, to pass
A day among the hills.

'Our work,' said I, 'was well begun,
Then from thy breast what thought,
Beneath so beautiful a sun, 15
So sad a sigh has brought?'

A second time did Matthew stop;
And fixing still his eye
Upon the eastern mountain-top,
To me he made reply: 20

'Yon cloud with that long purple cleft
Brings fresh into my mind
A day like this which I have left
Full thirty years behind.

'And just above yon slope of corn 25
Such colours, and no other,
Were in the sky, that April morn,
Of this the very brother.

'With rod and line I sued the sport
Which that sweet season gave, 30
And, to the churchyard come, stopped
short

Beside my daughter's grave.
'Nine summers had she scarcely seen,
The pride of all the vale;
And then she sang;—she would have 35
been

A very nightingale.
'Six feet in earth my Emma lay;
And yet I loved her more,
For so it seemed, than till that day
I e'er had loved before. 40

'And, turning from her grave, I met,
Beside the churchyard yew,
A blooming Girl, whose hair was wet
With points of morning dew.

'A basket on her head she bare; 45
Her brow was smooth and white:
To see a child so very fair,
It was a pure delight!

'No fountain from its rocky cave
E'er tripped with foot so free; 50
She seemed as happy as a wave
That dances on the sea.

'There came from me a sigh of pain
Which I could ill confine;
I looked at her, and looked again: 55
And did not wish her mine!'

Matthew is in his grave, yet now,
Methinks, I see him stand,
As at that moment, with a bough
Of wilding in his hand. 60

POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION

XII THE FOUNTAIN

A CONVERSATION

[Composed 1799.—Published 1800.]

We talked with open heart, and tongue
Affectionate and true,
A pair of friends, though I was young,
And Matthew seventy-two.

We lay beneath a spreading oak, 5
Beside a mossy seat;
And from the turf a fountain broke,
And gurgled at our feet.

'Now, Matthew!' said I, 'let us match
This water's pleasant tune 10
With some old border-song, or catch
That suits a summer's noon;

'Or of the church-clock and the chimes
Sing here beneath the shade,
That half-mad thing of witty rhymes 15
Which you last April made!'

In silence Matthew lay, and eyed
The spring beneath the tree;
And thus the dear old Man replied,
The grey-haired man of glee: 20

'No check, no stay, this Streamlet fears;
How merrily it goes!
'Twill murmur on a thousand years,
And flow as now it flows.

'And here, on this delightful day, 25
I cannot choose but think
How oft, a vigorous man, I lay
Beside this fountain's brink.

'My eyes are dim with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirred, 30
For the same sound is in my ears
Which in those days I heard.

'Thus fares it still in our decay:
And yet the wiser mind
Mourns less for what age takes away 35
Than what it leaves behind.

'The blackbird amid leafy trees,
The lark above the hill,
Let loose their carols when they please,
Are quiet when they will. 40

'With Nature never do *they* wage
A foolish strife; they see
A happy youth, and their old age
Is beautiful and free:

'But we are pressed by heavy laws; 45
And often, glad no more,
We wear a face of joy, because
We have been glad of yore.

'If there be one who need bemoan
His kindred laid in earth, 50
The household hearts that were his own;
It is the man of mirth.

'My days, my Friend, are almost gone,
My life has been approved,
And many love me! but by none 55
Am I enough beloved.'

'Now both himself and me he wrongs,
The man who thus complains!
I live and sing my idle songs
Upon these happy plains; 60

'And, Matthew, for thy children dead
I'll be a son to thee!'
At this he grasped my hand, and said,
'Alas! that cannot be.'

We rose up from the fountain-side; 65
And down the smooth descent
Of the green sheep-track did we glide;
And through the wood we went;

And, ere we came to Leonard's rock, 70
He sang those witty rhymes
About the crazy old church-clock,
And the bewildered chimes.

XIII

PERSONAL TALK

[Composed (?).—Published 1807.]

I

I AM not One who much or oft delight
To season my fireside with personal
talk,—

Of friends, who live within an easy walk,
Or neighbours, daily, weekly, in my
sight:

And, for my chance-acquaintance, ladies
bright, 5

Sons, mothers, maidens withering on the
stalk, 30

These all wear out of me, like Forms with
chalk

Painted on rich men's floors, for one feast-
night.

Better than such discourse doth silence
long,

Long, barren silence, square with my
desire; 10

To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,
In the loved presence of my cottage-fire,

And listen to the flapping of the flame,
Or kettle whispering its faint under-
song.

II

'Yet life,' you say, 'is life; we have seen
and see, 15

And with a living pleasure we describe;
And fits of sprightly malice do but bribe

The languid mind into activity.
Sound sense, and love itself, and mirth
and glee

Are fostered by the comment and the
gibe.' 20

POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION

Even be it so: yet still among your tribe,
 Our daily world's true Worldlings, rank
 not me!
 Children are blest, and powerful; their
 world lies
 More justly balanced; partly at their feet,
 And part far from them:—sweetest
 melodies²⁵
 Are those that are by distance made
 more sweet;
 Whose mind is but the mind of his own
 eyes,
 He is a Slave; the meanest we can meet!

III

Wings have we,—and as far as we can go
 We may find pleasure: wilderness and
 wood,³⁰
 Blank ocean and mere sky, support that
 mood
 Which with the lofty sanctifies the low.
 Dreams, books, are each a world; and
 books, we know,
 Are a substantial world, both pure and
 good:
 Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh
 and blood,³⁵
 Our pastime and our happiness will
 grow.
 There find I personal themes, a plenteous
 store,
 Matter wherein right voluble I am,
 To which I listen with a ready ear;
 Two shall be named, pre-eminently
 dear,—⁴⁰
 The gentle Lady married to the Moor;
 And heavenly Una with her milk-white
 Lamb.

IV

Nor can I not believe but that hereby
 Great gains are mine; for thus I live
 remote
 From evil-speaking; rancour, never
 sought,⁴⁵
 Comes to me not; malignant truth, or
 lie.
 Hence have I genial seasons, hence have I
 Smooth passions, smooth discourse, and
 joyous thought:
 And thus from day to day my little boat
 Rocks in its harbour, lodging peaceably.
 Blessings be with them—and eternal
 praise,⁵¹
 Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler
 cares—
 The Poets, who on earth have made us
 heirs
 Of truth and pure delight by heavenly
 lays!
 Oh! might my name be numbered among
 theirs,⁵⁵
 Then gladly would I end my mortal
 days.

XIV

ILLUSTRATED BOOKS AND NEWSPAPERS

[Composed 1846.—Published 1850.]

DISCOURSE was deemed Man's noblest
 attribute,
 And written words the glory of his hand;
 Then followed Printing with enlarged
 command
 For thought—dominion vast and absolute
 For spreading truth, and making love
 expand.⁵
 Now prose and verse sunk into disrepute
 Must lacquey a dumb Art that best can suit
 The taste of this once-intellectual Land.
 A backward movement surely have we
 here,
 From manhood—back to childhood; for
 the age—¹⁰
 Back towards caverned life's first rude
 career.
 Avaunt this vile abuse of pictured page!
 Must eyes be all in all, the tongue and ear
 Nothing? Heaven keep us from a lower
 stage!

XV

TO THE SPADE OF A FRIEND

(AN AGRICULTURIST)

Composed while we were labouring together in
 his pleasure-ground.

[Composed (probably) 1806.—Published 1807.]

SPADE! with which Wilkinson hath tilled
 his lands,
 And shaped these pleasant walks by
 Emont's side,
 Thou art a tool of honour in my hands;
 I press thee, through the yielding soil,
 with pride.⁴
 Rare master has it been thy lot to know;
 Long hast Thou served a man to reason
 true;
 Whose life combines the best of high and
 low,
 The labouring many and the resting few;
 Health, meekness, ardour, quietness
 secure,
 And industry of body and of mind;¹⁰
 And elegant enjoyments, that are pure
 As nature is;—too pure to be ~~imaged~~.
 Here often hast Thou heard the Poet sing
 In concord with his river murmuring by;
 Or in some silent field, while timid spring
 Is yet uncheered by other minstrelsy.¹⁶
 Who shall inherit Thee when death has laid
 Low in the darksome cell thine own dear
 lord?
 That man will have a trophy, humble
 Spade!¹⁹
 A trophy nobler than a conqueror's sword.

POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION

If he be one that feels, with skill to part
False praise from true, or, greater from
the less,
Thee will he welcome to his hand and
heart,
Thou monument of peaceful happiness!
He will not dread with Thee a toilsome
day—
Thee his loved servant, his inspiring
mate!
And, when Thou art past service, worn
away,
No dull oblivious nook shall hide thy fate.
His thrift thy uselessness will never scorn;
An *heir-loom* in his cottage wilt Thou
be:—
High will he hang thee up, well pleased
to adorn
His rustic chimney with the last of Thee!

XVI

A NIGHT THOUGHT

[Composed (?).—Published 1837 (*The Tribute*:
edited by Lord Northampton); vol. of 1842.]

Lo! where the Moon along the sky
Sails with her happy destiny;
Oft is she hid from mortal eye
Or dimly seen,
But when the clouds asunder fly
How bright her mien!
Far different we—a froward race,
Thousands though rich in Fortune's grace
With cherished sullenness of pace
Their way pursue,
Ingrates who wear a smileless face
The whole year through.
If kindred humours e'er would make
My spirit droop for drooping's sake,
From Fancy following in thy wake,
Bright ship of heaven!
A counter impulse let me take
And be forgiven.

XVII

INCIDENT

CHARACTERISTIC OF A FAVOURITE DOG

[Composed 1805.—Published 1807.]

ON his morning rounds the Master
Goes to learn how all things fare;
Searches pasture after pasture,
Sheep and cattle eyes with care;
And, for silence or for talk,
He hath comrades in his walk;
Four dogs, each pair of different breed,
Distinguished two for scent, and two for
speed.
See a hare before him started!
—Off they fly in earnest chase;
Every dog is eager-hearted,
All the four are in the race:

And the hare whom they pursue,
Knows from instinct what to do;
Her hope is near: no turn she makes;
But, like an arrow, to the river takes.

Deep the river was, and crusted
Thinly by a one night's frost;
But the nimble Hare hath trusted
To the ice, and safely crost;
She hath crost, and without heed
All are following at full speed,
When, lo! the ice, so thinly spread,
Breaks—and the greyhound, DART, is
overhead!

Better fate have PRINCE and SWALLOW—
See them cleaving to the sport!
MUSIC has no heart to follow,
Little MUSIC, she stops short.
She hath neither wish nor heart,
Hers is now another part:
A loving creature she, and brave!
And fondly strives her struggling friend
to save.

From the brink her paws she stretches,
Very hands as you would say!
And afflicting moans she fetches,
As he breaks the ice away.
For herself she hath no fears,—
Him alone she sees and hears,—
Makes efforts with complainings; nor
gives o'er
Until her fellow sinks to re-appear no
more.

XVIII

TRIBUTE

TO THE MEMORY OF THE SAME DOG

[Composed 1805.—Published 1807.]

LIE here, without a record of thy worth,
Beneath a covering of the common earth!
It is not from unwillingness to praise,
Or want of love, that here no Stone we
raise;
More thou deserv'st; but *this* man gives
to man,
Brother to brother, *this* is all we can.
Yet they to whom thy virtues made thee
dear
Shall find thee through all changes of the
year:
This Oak points out thy grave; the silent
tree
Will gladly stand a monument of thee.

We grieved for thee, and wished thy
end were past;
And willingly have laid thee here at last:
For thou hadst lived till every thing that
cheers
In thee had yielded to the weight of years;
Extreme old age had wasted thee away,
And left thee but a glimmering of the day;

POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION

Thy ears were deaf, and feeble were thy knees,—
 I saw thee stagger in the summer breeze,
 Too weak to stand against its sportive breath,
 And ready for the gentlest stroke of death.
 It came, and we were glad; yet tears were shed;
 Both man and woman wept when thou wert dead;
 Not only for a thousand thoughts that were,
 Old household thoughts, in which thou hadst thy share;
 But for some precious boons vouchsafed to thee,
 Found scarcely anywhere in like degree!
 For love, that comes wherever life and sense
 Are given by God, in thee was most intense;
 A chain of heart, a feeling of the mind,
 A tender sympathy, which did thee bind
 Not only to us Men, but to thy Kind: 31
 Yea, for thy fellow-brutes in thee we saw
 A soul of love, love's intellectual law:—
 Hence, if we wept, it was not done in shame;
 Our tears from passion and from reason came. 35
 And, therefore, shalt thou be an honoured name!

XIX FIDELITY

[Composed 1805.—Published 1807.]

A BARKING sound the Shepherd hears,
 A cry as of a dog or fox;
 He halts—and searches with his eyes
 Among the scattered rocks:
 And now at distance can discern 5
 A stirring in a brake of fern;
 And instantly a dog is seen,
 Glancing through that covert green.
 The Dog is not of mountain breed;
 Its motions, too, are wild and shy; 10
 With something, as the Shepherd thinks,
 Unusual in its cry:
 Nor is there any one in sight
 All round, in hollow or on height;
 Nor shout, nor whistle strikes his ear; 15
 What is the creature doing here?

It was a cove, a huge recess,
 That keeps, till June, December's snow;
 A lofty precipice in front,
 A silent tarn¹ below! 20
 Far in the bosom of Helvellyn,
 Remote from public road or dwelling,
 Pathway, or cultivated land;
 From trace of human foot or hand.

¹ Tarn is a small Mere or Lake, mostly high up in the mountains.

There sometimes doth a leaping fish 25
 Send through the tarn a lonely cheer;
 The crags repeat the raven's croak,
 In symphony austere;
 Thither the rainbow comes—the cloud—
 And mists that spread the flying shroud;
 And sunbeams; and the sounding blast,
 That, if it could, would hurry past; 32
 But that enormous barrier holds it fast.

Not free from boding thoughts, a while
 The Shepherd stood; then makes his way
 O'er rocks and stones, following the Dog
 As quickly as he may; 37
 Nor far had gone before he found
 A human skeleton on the ground;
 The appalled Discoverer with a sigh 40
 Looks round, to learn the history.

From those abrupt and perilous rocks
 The Man had fallen, that place of fear!
 At length upon the Shepherd's mind
 It breaks, and all is clear: 45
 He instantly recalled the name,
 And who he was, and whence he came;
 Remembered, too, the very day
 On which the Traveller passed this way.

But hear a wonder, for whose sake 50
 This lamentable tale I tell!
 A lasting monument of words
 This wonder merits well.
 The Dog, which still was hovering nigh,
 Repeating the same timid cry, 55
 This Dog, had been through three months' space
 A dweller in that savage place.

Yes, proof was plain that, since the day
 When this ill-fated Traveller died,
 The Dog had watched about the spot, 60
 Or by his master's side:
 How nourished here through such long time
 He knows, who gave that love sublime;
 And gave that strength of feeling, great
 Above all human estimate! 65

XX ODE TO DUTY

[Composed 1805.—Published 1807.]

‘Jam non consilio bonus, sed more eò perductus,
 ut non tantum rectè facere possim, sed nisi rectè
 facere non possim.’

STERN Daughter of the Voice of God!
 O Duty! if that name thou love
 Who art a light to guide, a rod
 To check the erring, and reprove;
 Thou, who art victory and law 5
 When empty terrors overawe;
 From vain temptations dost set free;
 And calm'st the weary strife of frail
 humanity!

POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth, 10
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth:
Glad Hearts! without reproach or blot;
Who do thy work, and know it not:
Oh! if through confidence misplaced 15
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power!
around them cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security. 20
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to
their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried; 25
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust:
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred 30
The task, in smoother walks to stray;
But thee I now would serve more strictly,
if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control; 35
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this unchartered freedom tites;
I feel the weight of chance-desires:
My hopes no more must change their
name,
I long for a repose that ever is the 40
same.

[Yet not the less would I throughout
Still act according to the voice
Of my own wish; and feel past doubt
That my submissiveness was choice:
Not seeking in the school of pride
For 'precepts over dignified,'
Denial and restraint I prize
No farther than they breed a second Will
more wise.¹]

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
And fragrance in thy footing treads; 46
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through
Thee, are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour; 50
Oh, let my weakness have an end!

¹ In ed. 1807 only.—Ed.

Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give; 55
And in the light of truth thy Bondman
let me live!

XXI

CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR

[Composed December 1805 or January 1806.—
Published 1807.]

Who is the happy Warrior? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish
to be?
—It is the generous Spirit, who, when
brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath
wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish
thought: 5
Whose high endeavours are an inward
light
That makes the path before him always
bright:
Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent
to learn;
Abides by this resolve, and stops not
there, 10
But makes his moral being his prime
care;
Who, doomed to go in company with
Pain,
And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable
train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
In face of these doth exercise a power 15
Which is our human nature's highest
dower;
Controls them and subdues, transmutes,
bereaves
Of their bad influence, and their good
receives:
By objects, which might force the soul to
abate
Her feeling, rendered more compas-
sionate; 20
Is placable—because occasions rise
So often that demand such sacrifice;
More skilful in self-knowledge, even more
pure,
As tempted more; more able to endure,
As more exposed to suffering and dis-
tress; 25
Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.
—'Tis he whose law is reason; who
depends
Upon that law as on the best of friends;
Whence, in a state where men are tempted
still
To evil for a guard against worse ill, 30
And what in quality or act is best
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest.

POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION

He labours good on good to fix, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows:
—Who, if he rise to station of command,
Rises by open means; and there will
stand 36

On honourable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire;
Who comprehends his trust, and to the
same

Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in
wait 41

For wealth, or honours, or for worldly
state;

Whom they must follow; on whose head
must fall,
Like showers of manna, if they come
at all:

Whose powers shed round him in the
common strife, 45

Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace;
But who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven
has joined

Great issues, good or bad for human
kind, 50

Is happy as a Lover; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a Man
inspired;

And, through the heat of conflict, keeps
the law

In calmness made, and sees what he
foresaw;

Or if an unexpected call succeed, 55
Come when it will, is equal to the need:

—He who, though thus endued as with a
sense

And faculty for storm and turbulence,
Is yet a Soul whose master-bias leans
To homefelt pleasures and to gentle
scenes; 60

Sweet images! which, wheresoe'er he be,
Are at his heart; and such fidelity
It is his darling passion to approve;
More brave for this, that he hath much to
love:— 64

'Tis, finally, the Man, who, lifted high,
Conspicuous object in a Nation's eye,
Or left unthought-of in obscurity,—
Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not—
Plays, in the many games of life, that one
Where what he most doth value must be
won: 71

Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
Who, not content that former worth
stand fast,

Looks forward, persevering to the last,
From well to better, daily self-surpass: 76
Who, whether praise of him must walk
the earth

For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,

Or he must fall, to sleep without his fame,
And leave a dead unprofitable name— 80
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
And, while the mortal mist is gathering,
draws

His breath in confidence of Heaven's
applause:

This is the happy Warrior; this is He 84
That every Man in arms should wish to be.

XXII

THE FORCE OF PRAYER¹

OR

THE FOUNDING OF BOLTON PRIORY
A TRADITION

[Composed 1807.—Published 1815 (4to, along with
The White Doe of Rylstone); ed. 1815.]

'What is good for a bootless bene?'
With these dark words begins my Tale;
And their meaning is, whence can comfort
spring

When Prayer is of no avail?

'What is good for a bootless bene?' 5
The Falconer to the Lady said;
And she made answer 'ENDLESS SORROW!'
For she knew that her Son was dead.

She knew it by the Falconer's words, 9
And from the look of the Falconer's eye;
And from the love which was in her soul
For her youthful Romilly.

—Young Romilly through Barden woods
Is ranging high and low;
And holds a greyhound in a leash, 15
To let slip upon buck or doe.

The pair have reached that fearful chasm,
How tempting to bestride!
For lordly Wharf is there pent in
With rocks on either side. 20

The striding-place is called THE STRID,
A name which it took of yore:
A thousand years hath it borne that name,
And shall a thousand more.

And hither is young Romilly come, 25
And what may now forbid
That he, perhaps for the hundredth time,
Shall bound across THE STRID?

He sprang in glee,—for what cared he
That the river was strong, and the rocks
were steep?— 30
But the greyhound in the leash hung back,
And checked him in his leap.

The Boy is in the arms of Wharf,
And strangled by a merciless force;
For never more was young Romilly seen
Till he rose a lifeless corse. 36

¹ See 'The White Doe of Rylstone.'

POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION

Now there is stillness in the vale,
And long, unspeaking, sorrow:
Wharf shall be to pitying hearts
A name more sad than Yarrow.

40

If for a Lover the Lady wept,
A solace she might borrow
From death, and from the passion of
death:—
Old Wharf might heal her sorrow.

She weeps not for the wedding-day
Which was to be to-morrow:
Her hope was a further-looking hope,
And hers is a mother's sorrow.

45

He was a tree that stood alone,
And proudly did its branches wave;
And the root of this delightful tree
Was in her husband's grave!

50

Long, long in darkness did she sit,
And her first words were, 'Let there be
In Bolton, on the field of Wharf,
A stately Priory!'

55

The stately Priory was reared;
And Wharf, as he moved along,
To matins joined a mournful voice,
Nor failed at even-song.

60

And the Lady prayed in heaviness
That looked not for relief!
But slowly did her succour come,
And a patience to her grief.

Oh! there is never sorrow of heart
That shall lack a timely end,
If but to God we turn, and ask
Of Him to be our friend!

65

XXIII

A FACT, AND AN IMAGINATION

OR

CANUTE AND ALFRED, ON THE SEA-SHORE

[Composed 1816.—Published 1820.]

THE Danish Conqueror, on his royal
chair,

Mustering a face of haughty sovereignty,
To aid a covert purpose, cried—'O ye
Approaching Waters of the deep, that
share

With this green isle my fortunes, come
not where
Your Master's throne is set.'—Deaf was
the Sea;

Her waves rolled on, respecting his decree
Less than they heed a breath of wanton
air.

—Then Canute, rising from the invaded
throne,
Said to his servile Courtiers,—'Poor the
reach,

10

The undisguised extent, of mortal sway!
He only is a King, and he alone
Deserves the name (this truth the billows
preach)
Whose everlasting laws, sea, earth, and
heaven obey.'

This just reproof the prosperous Dane
Drew from the influx of the main,
For some whose rugged northern mouths
would strain

At oriental flattery;
And Canute (fact more worthy to be
known)

From that time forth did for his brows
disown

The ostentatious symbol of a crown;
Esteeming earthly royalty
Contemptible as vain.

Now hear what one of elder days, 24
Rich theme of England's fondest praise,
Her darling Alfred, might have spoken;
To cheer the remnant of his host
When he was driven from coast to coast,
Distressed and harassed, but with mind
unbroken:

'My faithful followers, lo! the tide is
spent

That rose, and steadily advanced to fill 30
The shores and channels, working Nature's
will

Among the mazy streams that backward
went,

And in the sluggish pools where ships are
pent:

And now, his task performed, the flood
stands still,

At the green base of many an inland hill,
In placid beauty and sublime content!

Such the repose that sage and hero find;
Such measured rest the sedulous and good
Of humbler name; whose souls do, like

the flood 40
Of Ocean, press right on; or gently wind,
Neither to be diverted nor withstood

Until they reach the bounds by Heaven
assigned.'

XXIV

[Composed 1816.—Published 1820.]

'A LITTLE onward lend thy guiding hand
To these dark steps, a little further on!'

—What trick of memory to my voice hath
brought

This mournful iteration? For though
Time,

The Conqueror, crowns the Conquered,
on this brow

Planting his favourite silver diadem, 5
Nor he, nor minister of his—intent
To run before him, hath enrolled me yet,

POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION

Though not unmenaced, among those
who lean

Upon a living staff, with borrowed sight.
—O my own Dora, my beloved child! 11

Should that day come—but hark! the
birds salute

The cheerful dawn, brightening for me
the east;

For me, thy natural leader, once again
Impatient to conduct thee, not as erst 15

A tottering infant, with compliant stoop
From flower to flower supported; but to
curb

Thy nymph-like step swift-bounding o'er
the lawn,

Along the loose rocks, or the slippery
verge

Of foaming torrents.—From thy orisons
Come forth; and, while the morning air
is yet 21

Transparent as the soul of innocent youth,
Let me, thy happy guide, now point thy
way,

And now precede thee, winding to and fro,
Till we by perseverance gain the top 25

Of some smooth ridge, whose brink precipitous

Kindles intense desire for powers withheld
From this corporeal frame; whereon who
stands

Is seized with strong incitement to push
forth

His arms, as swimmers use, and plunge—
dread thought, 30

For pastime plunge—into the 'abrupt
abyss,'

Where ravens spread their plumy vans,
at ease!

And yet more gladly thee would I conduct

Through woods and spacious forests,—to
behold

There how the Original of human art, 35

Heaven-prompted Nature, measures and
erects

Her temples, fearless for the stately work,
Though waves, to every breeze, its high-
arched roof,

And storms the pillars rock. But we such
schools

Of reverential awe will chiefly seek 40

In the still summer noon, while beams of
light,

Reposing here, and in the aisles beyond
Traceably gliding through the dusk, recall
To mind the living presences of nuns;

A gentle, pensive, white-robed sisterhood,
Whose saintly radiance mitigates the
gloom 46

Of those terrestrial fabrics, where they
serve,

To Christ, the Sun of righteousness, espoused.

Now also shall the page of classic lore,
To these glad eyes from bondage freed,
again 50

Lie open; and the book of Holy Writ,
Again unfolded, passage clear shall yield

To heights more glorious still, and into
shades

More awful, where, advancing hand in hand,
We may be taught, O Darling of my care!

To calm the affections, elevate the soul,
And consecrate our lives to truth and love.

XXV

ODE TO LYCORIS

MAY, 1817

[Composed May, 1817.—Published 1820.]

I

AN age hath been when Earth was proud
Of lustre too intense

To be sustained; and Mortals bowed
The front in self-defence.

Who *then*, if Dian's crescent gleamed, 5

Or Cupid's sparkling arrow streamed
While on the wing the Urchin played,
Could fearlessly approach the shade?

—Enough for one soft vernal day, 10

If I, a bard of ebbing time,
And nurtured in a fickle climate,

May haunt this hornèd bay;
Whose amorous water multiplies

The flitting halcyon's vivid dyes; 14

And smooths her liquid breast—to show
These swan-like specks of mountain snow,
White as the pair that slid along the plains
Of heaven, when Venus held the reins!

II

In youth we love the darksome lawn
Brushed by the owl's wing; 20

Then, Twilight is preferred to Dawn,
And Autumn to the Spring.

Sad fancies do we then affect,
In luxury of disrespect

To our own prodigal excess 25

Of too familiar happiness.
Lycoris (if such name befit

Thee, thee my life's celestial sign!)
When Nature marks the year's decline,

Be ours to welcome it; 30

Pleased with the harvest hope that runs
Before the path of milder suns;

Pleased while the sylvan world displays
Its ripeness to the feeding gaze;

Pleased when the sullen winds resound
the knell

Of the resplendent miracle.

III

But something whispers to my heart
That, as we downward tend,

Lycoris! life requires an *art*
To which our souls must bend; 40

POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION

A skill—to balance and supply;
 And, ~~ere~~ the flowing fount be dry,
 As soon it must, a sense to sip,
 Or drink, with no fastidious lip.
 Then welcome, above all, the Guest 45
 Whose smiles, diffused o'er land and sea,
 Seem to recall the Deity
 Of youth into the breast:
 May pensive Autumn ne'er present
 A claim to her disparagement! 50
 While blossoms and the budding spray
 Inspire us in our own decay;
 Still, as we nearer draw to life's dark goal,
 Be hopeful Spring the favourite of the
 Soul!

XXVI TO THE SAME

[Composed 1817.—Published 1820.]

ENOUGH of climbing toil!—Ambition
 treads
 Here, as 'mid busier scenes, ground steep
 And rough,
 Or slippery even to peril! and each step,
 As we for most uncertain recompense
 Mount toward the empire of the fickle
 clouds, 5
 Each weary step, dwarfing the world
 below,
 Induces, for its old familiar sights,
 Unacceptable feelings of contempt,
 With wonder mixed—that Man could
 e'er be tied,
 In anxious bondage, to such nice array 10
 And formal fellowship of petty things!
 —Oh! 'tis the heart that magnifies this
 life,
 Making a truth and beauty of her own;
 And moss-grown alleys, circumscribing
 shades, 14
 And gurgling rills, assist her in the work
 More efficaciously than realms outspread,
 As in a map, before the adventurer's
 gaze—
 Ocean and Earth contending for regard.

The umbrageous woods are left—how
 far beneath!
 But lo! where darkness seems to guard
 the mouth 20
 Of yon wild cave, whose jagged brows are
 fringed
 With flaccid threads of ivy, in the still
 And sultry air, depending motionless.
 Yet cool the space within, and not un-
 cheered
 (As whose enters shall ere long perceive)
 By stealthy influx of the timid day 26
 Mingling with night, such twilight to
 compose
 As Numa loved; when, in the Egerian
 grot,

From the sage Nymph appearing at his
 wish
 He gained whate'er a regal mind might
 ask, 30
 Or need, of counsel breathed through lips
 divine.

Long as the heat shall rage, let that
 dim cave
 Protect us, there deciphering as we may
 Diluvian records; or the sighs of Earth
 Interpreting; or counting for old Time 35
 His minutes, by reiterated drops,
 Audible tears, from some invisible source
 That deepens upon fancy—more and more
 Drawn toward the centre whence those
 sighs creep forth
 To awe the lightness of humanity. 40
 Or, shutting up thyself within thyself,
 There let me see thee sink into a mood
 Of gentler thought, protracted till thine
 eye
 Be calm as water when the winds are gone,
 And no one can tell whither. Dearest
 Friend! 45
 We two¹ have known such happy hours
 together
 That, were power granted to replace them
 (fetched
 From out the pensive shadows where they
 lie)
 In the first warmth of their original sun-
 shine,
 Loth should I be to use it: passing sweet
 Are the domains of tender memory! 51

XXVII SEPTEMBER, 1819

[Composed September, 1819.—Published 1820.]

THE sylvan slopes with corn-clad fields
 Are hung, as if with golden shields,
 Bright trophies of the sun!
 Like a fair sister of the sky,
 Unruffled doth the blue lake lie, 5
 The mountains looking on.

And, sooth to say, yon vocal grove,
 Albeit uninspired by love,
 By love untaught to ring,
 May well afford to mortal ear 10
 An impulse more profoundly dear
 Than music of the Spring.

For *that* from turbulence and heat
 Proceeds, from some uneasy seat
 In nature's struggling frame, 15
 Some region of impatient life:
 And jealousy, and quivering strife,
 Therein a portion claim.

¹ 'We two': edd. 1820–1843; 'we too': edd. 1845, 1849–50.—Ed.

POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION

This, this is holy;—while I hear
These vespers of another year,
This hymn of thanks and praise,
My spirit seems to mount above
The anxieties of human love,
And earth's precarious days.

But list!—though winter storms be nigh,
Unchecked is that soft harmony:
There lives Who can provide
For all His creatures; and in Him,
Even like the radiant Seraphim,
These choristers confide.

XXVIII

UPON THE SAME OCCASION

[Composed September, 1819.—Published 1820.]

DEPARTING summer hath assumed
An aspect tenderly illumed,
The gentlest look of spring;
That calls from yonder leafy shade
Unfaded, yet prepared to fade,
A timely carolling.

No faint and hesitating trill,
Such tribute as to winter chill
The lonely redbreast pays!
Clear, loud, and lively is the din,
From social warblers gathering in
Their harvest of sweet lays.

Nor doth the example fail to cheer
Me, conscious that my leaf is sere,
And yellow on the bough:—
Fall, rosy garlands, from my head!
Ye myrtle wreaths, your fragrance shed
Around a younger brow!

Yet will I temperately rejoice;
Wide is the range, and free the choice
Of undiscordant themes;
Which, haply, kindred souls may prize
Not less than vernal ecstasies,
And passion's feverish dreams.

For deathless powers to verse belong,
And they like Demi-gods are strong
On whom the Muses smile;
But some their function have disclaimed,
Best pleased with what is aptliest framed
To enervate and defile.

Not such the initiatory strains
Committed to the silent pines
In Britain's earliest dawn:
Trembled the groves, the stars grew pale,
While all-too-daringly the veil
Of nature was withdrawn!

Nor such the spirit-stirring note
When the live chords Alcæus smote,
Inflamed by sense of wrong;
Woe! woe to Tyrants! from the lyre
Broke threateningly, in sparkles dire
Of fierce vindictive song.

And not unhallowed was the page
By winged Love inscribed, to assuage

The pangs of vain pursuit;
Love listening while the Lesbian Maid
With finest touch of passion swayed
Her own Æolian lute.

O ye, who patiently explore
The wreck of Herculanean lore,
What rapture! could ye seize
Some Theban fragment, or unroll
One precious, tender-hearted, scroll
Of pure Simonides.

That were, indeed, a genuine birth
Of poetry; a bursting forth
Of genius from the dust:
What Horace gloried to behold,
What Maro loved, shall we unfold?
Can haughty Time be just!

XXIX MEMORY

[Composed 1823.—Published 1827.]

A PEN—to register; a key—
That winds through secret wards;
Are well assigned to Memory
By allegoric Bards.

As aptly, also, might be given
A Pencil to her hand;
That, softening objects, sometimes even
Outstrips the heart's demand;

That smoothes foregone distress, the lines
Of lingering care subdues,
Long-vanished happiness refines,
And clothes in brighter hues;

Yet, like a tool of Fancy, works
Those Spectres to dilate
That startle Conscience, as she lurks
Within her lonely seat.

O! that our lives, which flee so fast,
In purity were such,
That not an image of the past
Should fear that pencil's touch!

Retirement then might hourly look
Upon a soothing scene,
Age steal to his allotted nook
Contented and serene;

With heart as calm as lakes that sleep,
In frosty moonlight glistening;
Or mountain rivers, where they creep
Along a channel smooth and deep,
To their own far-off murmurs listening.

XXX

[Composed 1829.—Published 1835.]

THIS Lawn, a carpet all alive
With shadows flung from leaves—to strive
In dance, amid a press
Of sunshine, an apt emblem yields
Of Worldlings revelling in the fields
Of strenuous idleness;

FORMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION

Less quick the stir when tide and breeze
Encounter, and to narrow seas
Forbid a moment's rest;
The medley less when boreal Lights 10
Glance to and fro, like aery Sprites
To feats of arms address!

Yet, spite of all this eager strife,
This ceaseless play, the genuine life
That serves the steadfast hours, 15
Is in the grass beneath, that grows
Unheeded, and the mute repose
Of sweetly-breathing flowers.

XXXI HUMANITY

[Composed 1829.—Published 1835.]

The Rocking-stones, alluded to in the beginning
of the following verses, are supposed to have
been used, by our British ancestors, both for
judicial and religious purposes. Such stones are
not uncommonly found, at this day, both in
Great Britain and in Ireland.

WHAT though the Accused, upon his own
appeal
To righteous Gods when man has ceased
to feel,
Or at a doubting Judge's stern command,
Before the STONE OF POWER no longer
stand—
To take his sentence from the balanced
Block, 5
As, at his touch, it rocks, or seems to
rock;
Though, in the depths of sunless groves,
no more
The Druid-priest the hallowed Oak adore;
Yet, for the Initiate, rocks and whisper-
ing trees
Do still perform mysterious offices! 10
And functions dwell in beast and bird
that sway
The reasoning mind, or with the fancy
play,
Inviting, at all seasons, ears and eyes
To watch for undelusive auguries:—
Not uninspired appear their simplest
ways; 15
Their voices mount symbolical of praise—
To mix with hymns that Spirits make and
hear;
And to fallen man their innocence is dear.
Enraptured Art draws from those sacred
springs
Streams that reflect the poetry of things!
Where Christian Martyrs stand in hues
portrayed, 21
That, might a wish avail, would never
fade,
Borne in their hands the lily and the palm
Shed round the altar a celestial calm;

There, too, behold the lamb and guileless
dove 25
Prest in the tenderness of virgin love
To saintly bosoms!—Glorious is the
blending
Of right affections climbing or descending
Along a scale of light and life, with cares
Alternate; carrying holy thoughts and
prayers 30
Up to the sovereign seat of the Most High;
Descending to the worm in charity;
Like those good Angels whom a dream of
night
Gave, in the field of Luz, to Jacob's sight
All, while *he* slept, treading the pendent
stairs 35
Earthward or heavenward, radiant mes-
sengers,
That, with a perfect will in one accord
Of strict obedience, serve the Almighty
Lord;
And with untired humility forbore
To speed their errand by the wings they
wore. 40

What a fair world were ours for verse
to paint,
If Power could live at ease with self-
restraint!
Opinion bow before the naked sense
Of the great Vision,—faith in Providence;
Merciful over all his creatures, just 45
To the least particle of sentient dust;
But fixing by immutable decrees
Seedtime and harvest for his purposes!
Then would be closed the restless oblique
eye
That looks for evil like a treacherous spy;
Disputes would then relax, like stormy
winds 51
That into breezes sink; impetuous minds
By discipline endeavour to grow meek
As Truth herself, whom they profess to
seek.
Then Genius, shunning fellowship with
Pride, 55
Would braid his golden locks at Wis-
dom's side;
Love ebb and flow untroubled by caprice;
And not alone *harsh* tyranny would cease,
But unoffending creatures find release
From qualified oppression, whose de-
fence 60
Rests on a hollow plea of recompense;
Thought-tempered wrongs, for each hu-
mane respect
Oft worse to bear, or deadlier in effect.
Witness those glances of indignant scorn
From some high-minded Slave, impelled
to spurn 65
The kindness that would make him less
forlorn;
Or, if the soul to bondage be subdued,
His look of pitiable gratitude!

POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION

Alas for thee, bright Galaxy of Isles,
Whose day departs in pomp, returns with
smiles— 70
To greet the flowers and fruitage of a
land,
As the sun mounts, by sea-born breezes
fanned;
A land whose azure mountain-tops are
seats
For Gods in council, whose green vales,
retreats
Fit for the shades of heroes, mingling
there 75
To breathe Elysian peace in upper air.

Though cold as winter, gloomy as the
grave,
Stone-walls a prisoner make, but not a
slave.
Shall man assume a property in man?
Lay on the moral will a withering ban?
Shame that our laws at distance still pro-
tect 81
Enormities, which they at home reject!
'Slaves cannot breathe in England'—yet
that boast
Is but a mockery! when from coast to
coast,
Though *fettered* slave be none, her floors
and soil 85
Groan underneath a weight of slavish
toil,
For the poor Many, measured out by
rules
Fetched with cupidity from heartless
schools,
That to an Idol, falsely called 'the Wealth
Of Nations,' sacrifice a People's health,
Body and mind and soul; a thirst so
keen 91
Is ever urging on the vast machine
Of sleepless Labour, 'mid whose dizzy
wheels
The Power least prized is that which
thinks and feels.

Then, for the pastimes of this delicate
age, 95
And all the heavy or light vassalage
Which for their sakes we fasten, as may
suit
Our varying moods, on human kind or
brute,
'Twere well in little, as in great, to pause,
Lest Fancy trifle with eternal laws. 100
Not from his fellows only man may
learn
Rights to compare and duties to dis-
cern!
All creatures and all objects, in degree,
Are friends and patrons of humanity.
There are to whom the garden, grove, and
field, 105
Perpetual lessons of forbearance yield;

Who would not lightly violate the grace
The lowliest flower possesses in its place;
Nor shorten the sweet life, too fugitive,
Which nothing less than Infinite Power
could give. 110

XXXII

[Composed 1846.—Published 1850.]

THE unremitting voice of nightly streams
That wastes so oft, we think, its tuneful
powers,
If neither soothing to the worm that
gleams
Through dewy grass, nor small birds
hushed in bowers,
Nor unto silent leaves and drowsy
flowers,— 5
That voice of unpretending harmony
(For who what is shall measure by what
seems
To be, or not to be,
Or tax high Heaven with prodigality?)
Wants not a healing influence that can
creep 10
Into the human breast, and mix with sleep
To regulate the motion of our dreams
For kindly issues—as through every clime
Was felt near murmuring brooks in
earliest time;
As, at this day, the rudest swains who
dwell 15
Where torrents roar, or hear the tinkling
knell
Of water-breaks, with grateful heart
could tell.

XXXIII

THOUGHTS ON THE SEASONS

[Composed 1829.—Published 1835.]

FLATTERED with promise of escape
From every hurtful blast,
Spring takes, O sprightly May! thy shape,
Her loveliest and her last.
Less fair is summer riding high 5
In fierce solstitial power,
Less fair than when a lenient sky
Brings on her parting hour.
When earth repays with golden sheaves
The labours of the plough, 10
And ripening fruits and forest leaves
All brighten on the bough;
What pensive beauty autumn shows,
Before she hears the sound
Of winter rushing in, to close 15
The emblematic round!
Such be our Spring, our Summer such;
So may our Autumn blend
With hoary Winter, and Life touch, 19
Through heaven-born hope, her end!

POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION

XXXIV TO —

UPON THE BIRTH OF HER FIRST-BORN
CHILD, MARCH, 1833

[Composed March, 1833.—Published 1835.]

*'Tum porro puer, ut sacvis projectus ab undis
Navita, nudus humi jacet,' &c.—LUCRETIVS.*

LIKE a shipwrecked Sailor tost
By rough waves on a perilous coast,
Lies the Babe, in helplessness
And in tenderest nakedness,
Flung by labouring Nature forth
Upon the mercies of the earth.
Can its eyes beseech?—no more
Than the hands are free to implore:
Voice but serves for one brief cry;
Plaint was it? or prophecy
Of sorrow that will surely come?
Omen of man's grievous doom!

But, O Mother! by the close
Duly granted to thy throes;
By the silent thanks, now tending
Incense-like to Heaven, descending
Now to mingle and to move
With the gush of earthly love,
As a debt to that frail Creature,
Instrument of struggling Nature
For the blissful calm, the peace
Known but to this *one* release—
Can the pitying spirit doubt
That for human-kind springs out
From the penalty a sense
Of more than mortal recompense?

As a floating summer cloud,
Though of gorgeous drapery proud,
To the sun-burnt traveller,
Or the stooping labourer,
 Oft-times makes its bounty known
By its shadow round him thrown;
So, by chequerings of sad cheer,
Heavenly Guardians, brooding near,
Of their presence tell—too bright
Haply for corporeal sight!
Ministers of grace divine
Feelingly their brows incline
O'er this seeming Castaway
Breathing, in the light of day,
Something like the faintest breath
That has power to baffle death—
Beautiful, while very weakness
Captivates like passive meekness.

And, sweet Mother! under warrant
Of the universal Parent,
Who repays in season due
Them who have, like thee, been true
To the filial chain let down
From his everlasting throne,
Angels hovering round thy couch,
With their softest whispers vouch,
That—whatever griefs may fret,
Cares entangle, sins beset,

This thy First-born, and with tears 55
Stain her cheek in future years—
Heavenly succour, not denied
To the babe, whate'er betide,
Will to the woman be supplied!

Mother! blest be thy calm ease; 60
Blest the starry promises,—
And the firmament benign
Hallowed be it, where they shine!
Yes, for them whose souls have scope
Ample for a winged hope, 65
And can earthward bend an ear
For needful listening, pledge is here,
That, if thy new-born Charge shall tread
In thy footsteps, and be led
By that other Guide, whose light 70
Of manly virtues, mildly bright,
Gave him first the wished-for part
In thy gentle virgin heart;
Then, amid the storms of life
Presigned by that dread strife 75
Whence ye have escaped together,
She may look for serene weather;
In all trials sure to find
Comfort for a faithful mind;
Kindlier issues, holier rest, 80
Than even now await her prest,
20 Conscious Nursling, to thy breast!

XXXV THE WARNING

A SEQUEL TO THE FOREGOING 25
[Composed 1833.—Published 1835.]
LIST, the winds of March are blowing;
Her ground-flowers shrink, afraid of
showing
30 Their meek heads to the nipping air,
Which ye feel not, happy pair!
Sunk into a kindly sleep. 5
We, meanwhile, our hope will keep;
And if Time leagued with adverse Change
(Too busy fear!) shall cross its range,
35 Whatsoever check they bring,
Anxious duty hindering, 10
To like hope our prayers will cling.

Thus, while the ruminating spirit feeds
Upon the events of home as life proceeds,
Affections pure and holy in their source
Gain a fresh impulse, run a livelier course;
Hopes that within the Father's heart
prevail, 16
40 Are in the experienced Grandsire's slow
to fail;
And if the harp pleased his gay youth, it
rings
To his grave touch with no unready
50 strings,
While thoughts press on, and feelings
overflow, 20
And quick words round him fall like
flakes of snow.

POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION

Thanks to the Powers that yet maintain their sway,
And have renewed the tributary Lay.
Truths of the heart flock in with eager pace,
And FANCY greets them with a fond embrace;
Swift as the rising sun his beams extends
She shoots the tidings forth to distant friends;
Their gifts she hails (deemed precious, as they prove
For the unconscious Babe so prompt a love!)—
But from this peaceful centre of delight
Vague sympathies have urged her to take flight:
Rapt into upper regions, like the bee
That sucks from mountain-heath her honey fee,
Or, like the warbling lark intent to shroud
His head in sunbeams or a bowery cloud,
She soars—and here and there her pinions rest
On proud towers, like this humble cottage, blest
With a new visitant, an infant guest—
Towers where red streamers flout the breezy sky
In pomp foreseen by her creative eye,
When feasts shall crowd the hall, and steeples bells
Glad proclamation make, and heights and dells
Catch the blithe music as it sinks and swells,
And harboured ships, whose pride is on the sea,
Shall hoist their topmost flags in sign of glee,
Honouring the hope of noble ancestry.

But who (though neither reckoning ills assigned
By Nature, nor reviewing in the mind
The track that was, and is, and must be, worn
With weary feet by all of woman born)—
Shall now by such a gift with joy be moved,
Nor feel the fulness of that joy reproved?
Not He, whose last faint memory will command
The truth that Britain was his native land;
Whose infant soul was tutored to confide
In the cleansed faith for which her martyrs died;
Whose boyish ear the voice of her renown
With rapture thrilled; whose Youth revered the crown
Of Saxon liberty that Alfred wore,
Alfred, dear Babe, thy great Progenitor!
—Not He, who from her mellowed practice drew
His social sense of just, and fair, and true;

And saw, thereafter, on the soil of France
Rash Polity begin her maniac dance,
Foundations broken up, the deeps run wild,
Nor grieved to see (himself not unbeguiled)—
Woke from the dream, the dreamer to upbraid,
And learn how sanguine expectations fade
When novel trusts by folly are betrayed,—
To see Presumption, turning pale, refrain
From further havoc, but repent in vain,—
Good aims lie down, and perish in the road
Where guilt had urged them on with ceaseless goad,
Proofs thickening round her that on public ends
Domestic virtue vitally depends,
That civic strife can turn the happiest hearth
Into a grievous sore of self-tormenting earth.

Can such a One, dear Babel! though glad and proud
To welcome thee, repel the fears that crowd
Into his English breast, and spare to quake
Less for his own than for thy innocent sake?
Too late—or, should the providence of God
Lead, through dark ways by sin and sorrow trod,
Justice and peace to a secure abode,
Too soon—thou com'st into this breathing world;
Ensigns of mimic outrage are unfurled.
Who shall preserve or prop the tottering Realm?
What hand suffice to govern the state-helm?
If in the aims of men the surest test
Of good or bad (whate'er be sought for or profest)
Lie in the means required, or ways ordained,
For compassing the end, else never gained;
Yet governors and governed both are blind
To this plain truth, or fling it to the wind;
If to expedience principle must bow;
Past, future, shrinking up beneath the incumbent Now;
If cowardly concession still must feed
The thirst for power in men who ne'er concede;
Nor turn aside, unless to shape a way
For domination at some riper day;
If generous Loyalty must stand in awe
Of subtle Treason, in his mask of law,
Or with bravado insolent and hard,
Provoking punishment, to win reward;

POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION

If office help the factious to conspire, 105
And they who *should* extinguish, fan the
fire—
Then, will the sceptre be a straw, the
crown
Sit loosely, like the thistle's crest of down;
To be blown off at will, by Power that
spares it
In cunning patience, from the head that
wears it. 110

Lost people, trained to theoretic feud!
Lost above all, ye labouring multitude!
Bewildered whether ye, by slanderous
tongues

Deceived, mistake calamities for wrongs;
And over fancied usurpations brood, 115
Oft snapping at revenge in sullen mood;
Or, from long stress of real injuries fly
To desperation for a remedy;

In bursts of outrage spread your judg-
ments wide,
And to your wrath cry out, 'Be thou our
guide;' 120

Or, bound by oaths, come forth to tread
earth's floor
In marshalled thousands, darkening street
and moor

With the worst shape mock-patience ever
wore;

Or, to the giddy top of self-esteem
By Flatterers carried, mount into a dream
Of boundless suffrage, at whose sage
behest 126

Justice shall rule, disorder be suppress,
And every man sit down as Plenty's
Guest!

—O for a bridle bitted with remorse
To stop your Leaders in their headstrong
course! 130

Oh may the Almighty scatter with His
grace

These mists, and lead you to a safer place,
By paths no human wisdom can foretrace!
May He pour round you, from worlds far
above

Man's feverish passions, His pure light of
love, 135

That quietly restores the natural mien
To hope, and makes truth willing to be
seen!

Else shall your blood-stained hands in
frenzy reap

Fields gaily sown when promises were
cheap.— 139

Why is the Past belied with wicked art,
The Future made to play so false a part,
Among a people famed for strength of
mind,

Foremost in freedom, noblest of man-
kind?

We act as if we joyed in the sad tune
Storms make in rising, valued in the
moon 145

Nought but her changes. Thus, ungrate-
ful Nation!

If thou persist, and, scorning moderation,
Spread for thyself the snares of tribula-
tion,

Whom, then, shall meekness guard? What
saving skill

Lie in forbearance, strength in standing
still? 150

—Soon shall the widow (for the speed of
Time

Nought equals when the hours are winged
with crime)

Widow, or wife, implore on tremulous
knee,

From him who judged her lord, a like
decree;

The skies will weep o'er old men deso-
late: 155

Ye little-ones! Earthshudders at your fate,
Outcasts and homeless orphans—

But turn, my Soul, and from the sleep-
ing pair

Learn thou the beauty of omniscient care!
Be strong in faith, bid anxious thoughts

lie still; 160
Seek for the good and cherish it—the ill
Oppose, or bear with a submissive will.

XXXVI

[Composed 1833.—Published 1835.]

If this great world of joy and pain
Revolve in one sure track;

If freedom, set, will rise again,
And virtue, flown, come back;

Woe to the purblind crew who fill 5
The heart with each day's care;

Nor gain, from past or future, skill
To bear, and to forbear!

XXXVII

THE LABOURER'S NOON-DAY HYMN

[Composed 1834.—Published 1835.]

Up to the throne of God is borne
The voice of praise at early morn,

And he accepts the punctual hymn
Sung as the light of day grows dim:

Nor will he turn his ear aside 5
From holy offerings at noontide.

Then here reposing let us raise
A song of gratitude and praise.

What though our burthen be not light
We need not toil from morn to night; 10

The respite of the mid-day hour
Is in the thankful Creature's power.

Blest are the moments, doubly blest,
That, drawn from this one hour of rest,

Are with a ready heart bestowed 15
Upon the service of our God!

POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION

Each field is then a hallowed spot,
An altar is in each man's cot,
A church in every grove that spreads
Its living roof above our heads. 20

Look up to Heaven! the industrious Sun
Already half his race hath run;
He cannot halt nor go astray,
But our immortal Spirits may.

Lord! since his rising in the East, 25
If we have faltered or transgressed,
Guide, from thy love's abundant source,
What yet remains of this day's course:

Help with thy grace, through life's short
day,

Our upward and our downward way; 30
And glorify for us the west,
When we shall sink to final rest.

XXXVIII ODE

COMPOSED ON MAY MORNING

[Composed 1826.—Published 1835.]

WHILE from the purpling east departs
The star that led the dawn,
Blithe Flora from her couch upstarts,
For May is on the lawn.
A quickening hope, a freshening glee, 5
Foreran the expected Power,
Whose first-drawn breath from bush and
tree
Shakes off that pearly shower.

All Nature welcomes Her whose sway 10
Tempers the year's extremes;
Who scattereth lustres o'er noon-day,
Like morning's dewy gleams;
While mellow warble, sprightly trill,
The tremulous heart excite;
And hums the balmy air to still 15
The balance of delight.

Time was, blest Power! when youths and
maids
At peep of dawn would rise,
And wander forth, in forest glades
Thy birth to solemnize. 20
Though mute the song—to grace the rite
Untouched the hawthorn bough,
Thy Spirit triumphs o'er the slight;
Man changes, but not Thou!

Thy feathered Lieges bill and wings 25
In love's disport employ;
Warmed by thy influence, creeping things
Awake to silent joy:
Queen art thou still for each gay plant
Where the slim wild deer roves; 30
And served in depths where fishes haunt
Their own mysterious groves.

Cloud-piercing peak, and trackless heath,
Instinctive homage pay;

Nor wants the dim-lit cave a wreath 35
To honour thee, sweet May!
Where cities fanned by thy brisk airs
Behold a smokeless sky,
Their puniest flower-pot-nursling dares
To open a bright eye. 40

And if, on this thy natal morn,
The pole, from which thy name
Hath not departed, stands forlorn
Of song and dance and game;
Still from the village-green a vow 45
Aspires to thee address,
Wherever peace is on the brow,
Or love within the breast.

Yes! where Love nestles thou canst teach 50
The soul to love the more;
Hearts also shall thy lessons reach
That never loved before.
Stript is the haughty one of pride,
The bashful freed from fear,
While rising, like the ocean-tide, 55
In flows the joyous year.

Hush, feeble lyre! weak words refuse
The service to prolong!
To yon exulting thrush the Muse
Entrusts the imperfect song; 60
His voice shall chant, in accents clear,
Throughout the live-long day,
Till the first silver star appear,
The sovereignty of May.

XXXIX TO MAY

[Composed 1826–34.—Published 1835.]

THOUGH many suns have risen and set
Since thou, blithe May, wert born,
And Bards, who hailed thee, may forget
Thy gifts, thy beauty scorn; 5
There are who to a birthday strain
Confine not harp and voice,
But evermore throughout thy reign
Are grateful and rejoice!

Delicious odours! music sweet,
Too sweet to pass away! 10
Oh for a deathless song to meet
The soul's desire—a lay
That, when a thousand years are told,
Should praise thee, genial Power!
Through summer heat, autumnal cold, 15
And winter's dreariest hour.

Earth, sea, thy presence feel—nor less,
If yon ethereal blue
With its soft smile the truth express,
The heavens have felt it too. 20
The inmost heart of man if glad
Partakes a livelier cheer;
And eyes that cannot but be sad
Let fall a brightened tear.

POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION

- Since thy return, through days and weeks
Of hope that grew by stealth, 26
How many wan and faded cheeks
Have kindled into health!
The Old, by thee revived, have said,
'Another year is ours;' 30
And wayworn Wanderers, poorly fed,
Have smiled upon thy flowers.
- Who tripping lips a merry song
Amid his playful peers?
The tender Infant who was long 35
A prisoner of fond fears;
But now, when every sharp-edged blast
Is quiet in its sheath,
His Mother leaves him free to taste
Earth's sweetness in thy breath. 40
- Thy help is with the weed that creeps
Along the humblest ground;
No cliff so bare but on its steep
Thy favours may be found;
But most on some peculiar nook 45
That our own hands have drest,
Thou and thy train are proud to look,
And seem to love it best.
- And yet how pleased we wander forth
When May is whispering, 'Come!' 50
Choose from the bowers of virgin earth
The happiest for your home;
Heaven's bounteous love through me is
spread
From sunshine, clouds, winds, waves,
Drops on the mouldering turret's head,
And on your turf-clad graves!' 56
- Such greeting heard, away with sighs
For lilies that must fade,
Or 'the rathe primrose as it dies
Forsaken' in the shade! 60
Vernal fruitions and desires
Are linked in endless chase;
While, as one kindly growth retires,
Another takes its place.
- And what if thou, sweet May, hast known
Mishap by worm and blight; 66
If expectations newly blown
Have perished in thy sight;
If loves and joys, while up they sprung,
Were caught as in a snare; 70
Such is the lot of all the young,
However bright and fair.
- Lo! Streams that April could not check
Are patient of thy rule;
Gurgling in foamy water-break,
Loitering in glassy pool: 75
By thee, thee only, could be sent
Such gentle mists as glide,
Curling with unconfirmed intent,
On that green mountain's side. 80
- How delicate the leafy veil
Through which yon house of God
- Gleams 'mid the peace of this deep dale
By few but shepherds trod!
And lowly huts, near beaten ways, 85
No sooner stand attired
In thy fresh wreaths, than they for praise
Peep forth, and are admired.
- Season of fancy and of hope,
Permit not for one hour 90
A blossom from thy crown to drop,
Nor add to it a flower!
Keep, lovely May, as if by touch
Of self-restraining art,
This modest charm of not too much, 95
Part seen, imagined part!

XL LINES

SUGGESTED BY A PORTRAIT FROM THE
PENCIL OF F. STONE

[Composed 1834.—Published 1835.]

- BEGUAILED into forgetfulness of care
Due to the day's unfinished task; of pen
Or book regardless, and of that fair scene
In Nature's prodigality displayed
Before my window, oftentimes and long 5
I gaze upon a Portrait whose mild gleam
Of beauty never ceases to enrich
The common light; whose stillness charms
the air,
Or seems to charm it, into like repose;
Whose silence, for the pleasure of the
ear, 10
Surpasses sweetest music. There she sits
With emblematic purity attired
In a white vest, white as her marble neck
Is, and the pillar of the throat would be
But for the shadow by the drooping chin
Cast into that recess—the tender shade,
The shade and light, both there and every-
where, 17
And through the very atmosphere she
breathes,
Broad, clear, and toned harmoniously,
with skill
That might from nature have been learnt
in the hour 20
When the lone shepherd sees the morning
spread
Upon the mountains. Look at her,
whoe'er
Thou be that, kindling with a poet's soul,
Hast loved the painter's true Promethean
craft
Intensely—from Imagination take 25
The treasure,—what mine eyes behold see
thou,
Even though the Atlantic ocean roll
between.
- A silver line, that runs from brow to
crown
And in the middle parts the braided hair,

POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION

Just serves to show how delicate a soil 30
The golden harvest grows in; and those
eyes,
Soft and capacious as a cloudless sky
Whose azure depth their colour emulates,
Must needs be conversant with upward
looks,
Prayer's voiceless service; but now, seek-
ing nought 35
And shunning nought, their own peculiar
life
Of motion they renounce, and with the
head
Partake its inclination towards earth
In humble grace, and quiet pensiveness
Caught at the point where it stops short
of sadness. 40

Offspring of soul-bewitching Art, make
me
Thy confidant! say, whence derived that
air
Of calm abstraction? Can the ruling
thought
Be with some lover far away, or one
Crossed by misfortune, or of doubted
faith? 45
Inapt conjecture! Childhood here, a moon
Crescent in simple loveliness serene,
Has but approached the gates of woman-
hood,
Not entered them; her heart is yet un-
pierced
By the blind Archer-god; her fancy free:
The fount of feeling, if unsought else-
where, 51
Will not be found.

Her right hand, as it lies
Across the slender wrist of the left arm
Upon her lap reposing, holds—but mark
How slackly, for the absent mind per-
mits 55
No firmer grasp—a little wild-flower,
joined
As in a posy, with a few pale ears
Of yellowing corn, the same that over-
topped
And in their common birthplace sheltered
it
Till they were plucked together; a blue
flower 60
Called by the thrifty husbandman a weed;
But Ceres, in her garland, might have
worn
That ornament, unblamed. The floweret,
held
In scarcely conscious fingers, was, she
knows,
(Her Father told her so) in youth's gay
dawn 65
Her Mother's favourite; and the orphan
Girl,
In her own dawn—a dawn less gay and
bright,

Loves it, while there in solitary peace
She sits, for that departed Mother's sake.
—Not from a source less sacred is derived
(Surely I do not err) that pensive air 71
Of calm abstraction through the face
diffused

And the whole person.

Words have something told
More than the pencil can, and verily
More than is needed, but the precious
Art 75
Forgives their interference—Art divine,
That both creates and fixes, in despite
Of Death and Time, the marvels it hath
wrought.

Strange contrasts have we in this world
of ours! 79

That posture, and the look of filial love
Thinking of past and gone, with what is
left

Dearly united, might be swept away
From this fair Portrait's fleshly Arche-
type,

Even by an innocent fancy's slightest
freak

Banished, nor ever, haply, be restored 85
To their lost place, or meet in harmony
So exquisite; but *here* do they abide,
Enshrined for ages. Is not then the Art
Godlike, a humble branch of the divine,
In visible quest of immortality, 90
Stretched forth with trembling hope?—In
every realm,

From high Gibraltar to Siberian plains,
Thousands, in each variety of tongue
That Europe knows, would echo this
appeal;

One above all, a Monk who waits on God
In the magnific Convent built of yore 96
To sanctify the Escorial palace. He—
Guiding, from cell to cell and room to
room,

A British Painter (eminent for truth
In character, and depth of feeling, shown
By labours that have touched the hearts
of kings, 101

And are endeared to simple cottagers)—
Came, in that service, to a glorious work,
Our Lord's Last Supper, beautiful as
when first

The appropriate Picture, fresh from
Titian's hand, 105

Graced the Refectory: and there, while
both
Stood with eyes fixed upon that master-
piece,

The hoary Father in the Stranger's ear
Breathed out these words:—'Here daily
do we sit,

Thanks given to God for daily bread, and
here 110

Pondering the mischiefs of these restless
times,

POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION

And thinking of my Brethren, dead,
Or changed, and changing, I not seldom
Upon this solemn Company unmoved
By shock of circumstance, or lapse of
years,
Until I cannot but believe that they—
They are in truth the Substance, we the
Shadows.¹

So spake the mild Jeronymite, his griefs
Melting away within him like a dream
Ere he had ceased to gaze, perhaps to
speak:
And I, grown old, but in a happier land,
Domestic Portrait! have to verse con-
signed
In thy calm presence those heart-moving
words:
Words that can soothe, more than they
agitate;
Whose spirit, like the angel that went
down
Into Bethesda's pool, with healing virtue
Informs the fountain in the human breast
Which by the visitation was disturbed.
—But why this stealing tear? Com-
panion mute,
On thee I look, not sorrowing; fare thee
well,
My Song's Inspirer, once again farewell!¹¹

XLI

THE FOREGOING SUBJECT RESUMED

[Composed 1834.—Published 1835.]

AMONG a grave fraternity of Monks,
For One, but surely not for One alone,
Triumphs, in that great work, the
Painter's skill,
Humbling the body, to exalt the soul;
Yet representing, amid wreck and wrong
And dissolution and decay, the warm
And breathing life of flesh, as if already
Clothed with impassive majesty, and
graced
With no mean earnest of a heritage
Assigned to it in future worlds. Thou,
too,
With thy memorial flower, meek Por-
traiture!
From whose serene companionship I
passed
Pursued by thoughts that haunt me still;
thou also—
Though but a simple object, into light

¹ The pile of buildings composing the palace and convent of San Lorenzo, has, in common usage, lost its proper name in that of the *Escorial*, a village at the foot of the hill upon which the splendid edifice, built by Philip the Second, stands. It need scarcely be added that Wilkie is the painter alluded to.

Called forth by those affections that
endear
The private hearth; though keeping thy
sole seat
In singleness, and little tried by time,
Creation, as it were, of yesterday—
With a congenial function art endued
For each and all of us, together joined
In course of nature under a low roof
By charities and duties that proceed
Out of the bosom of a wiser vow.
To a like salutary sense of awe
Or sacred wonder, growing with the
power
Of meditation that attempts to weigh,
In faithful scales, things and their op-
posites,
Can thy enduring quiet gently raise
A household small and sensitive,—whose
love,
Dependent as in part its blessings are
Upon frail ties dissolving or dissolved
On earth, will be revived, we trust, in
heaven.³

XLII

[Composed 1844.—Published 1845.]

So fair, so sweet, withal so sensitive,
Would that the little Flowers were born
to live,
Conscious of half the pleasure which they
give;

That to this mountain-daisy's self were
known
The beauty of its star-shaped shadow,
thrown
On the smooth surface of this naked
stone!

And what if hence a bold desire should
mount
High as the Sun, that he could take
account
Of all that issues from his glorious
fount!

So might he ken how by his sovereign
aid
These delicate companionships are made;
And how he rules the pomp of light and
shade;

³ In the class entitled 'Musings,' in Mr. Southey's Minor Poems, is one upon his own miniature Picture, taken in childhood, and another upon a landscape painted by Gaspar Poussin. It is possible that every word of the above verses, though similar in subject, might have been written had the author been unacquainted with those beautiful effusions of poetic sentiment. But, for his own satisfaction, he must be allowed thus publicly to acknowledge the pleasure those two Poems of his Friend have given him, and the grateful influence they have upon his mind as often as he reads them, or thinks of them.

POEMS OF SENTIMENT AND REFLECTION

And were the Sister-power that shines by night
So privileged, what a countenance of delight
Would through the clouds break forth on human sight! 15

Fond fancies! wheresoe'er shall turn thine eye
On earth, air, ocean, or the starry sky,
Converse with Nature in pure sympathy;
All vain desires, all lawless wishes quelled,
Be Thou to love and praise alike impelled, 20
Whatever boon is granted or withheld.

Or in the diver's grasp fetched up from caves
Where sea-nymphs might be proud to dwell: 15
But whose rash hand (again I ask) could dare,
'Mid casual tokens and promiscuous slows,
To circumscribe this Shape in fixed repose;
Could imitate for indolent survey,
Perhaps for touch profane, 20
Plumes that might catch, but cannot keep, a stain;
And, with cloud-streaks lightest and loftiest, share
The sun's first greeting, his last farewell ray!

XLIII

UPON SEEING A COLOURED DRAWING OF THE BIRD OF PARADISE IN AN ALBUM

[Composed 1835-6.—Published 1837.]

Who rashly strove thy Image to portray?
Thou buoyant minion of the tropic air;
How could he think of the live creature—
gay
With a divinity of colours, drest
In all her brightness, from the dancing crest 5
Far as the last gleam of the filmy train
Extended and extending to sustain
The motions that it graces—and forbear
To drop his pencil! Flowers of every clime
Depicted on these pages smile at time;
And gorgeous insects copied with nice care 11
Are here, and likenesses of many a shell
Tossed ashore by restless waves,

Resplendent Wanderer! followed with glad eyes
Where'er her course; mysterious Bird! 25
To whom, by wondering Fancy stirred,
Eastern Islanders have given
A holy name—the Bird of Heaven!
And even a title higher still,
The Bird of God! whose blessed will 30
She seems performing as she flies
Over the earth and through the skies
In never-wearied search of Paradise—
Region that crowns her beauty with the name
She bears for us—for us how blest, 35
How happy at all seasons, could like aim
Uphold our Spirits urged to kindred flight
On wings that fear no glance of God's pure sight,
No tempest from his breath, their promised rest
Seeking with indefatigable quest 40
Above a world that deems itself most wise
When most enslaved by gross realities!

SONNETS DEDICATED TO LIBERTY AND ORDER

I

COMPOSED AFTER READING A NEWS-
PAPER OF THE DAY

[Composed 1831.—Published 1835.]

'PEOPLE! your chains are severing link
by link;
Soon shall the Rich be levelled down—the
Poor
Meet them half way.' Vain boast! for
These, the more
They thus would rise, must low and lower
sink
Till, by repentance stung, they fear to
think;

While all lie prostrate, save the tyrant
few
Bent in quick turns each other to undo,
And mix the poison, they themselves
must drink.
Mistrust thyself, vain Country! cease to
cry,
'Knowledge will save me from the
threatened woe.' 10
For if than other rash ones more thou
know,
Yet on presumptuous wing as far would
fly
Above thy knowledge as they dared to go,
Thou wilt provoke a heavier penalty.

SONNETS DEDICATED TO LIBERTY AND ORDER

II

UPON THE LATE GENERAL FAST
MARCH, 1832

[Composed 1832.—Published 1838.]

RELUCTANT¹ call it was; the rite delayed;
And in the Senate some there were who
dofted
The last of their humanity, and scoffed
At providential judgments, undismayed
By their own daring. But the People
prayed
As with one voice; their flinty heart grew
soft

With penitential sorrow, and aloft
Their spirit mounted, crying, 'God us aid!'
Oh that with aspirations more intense,
Chastised by self-abasement more pro-
found,
This People, once so happy, so renowned
For liberty, would seek from God defence
Against far heavier ill, the pestilence
Of revolution, impiously unbound!

III

[Composed probably 1838.—Published 1838.]

SAID Secrecy to Cowardice and Fraud,
Falsehood and Treachery, in close council
met,
Deep under ground, in Pluto's cabinet,
'The frost of England's pride will soon
be thawed;
Hooded the open brow that overawed
Our schemes; the faith and honour, never
yet
By us with hope encountered, be upset;—
For once I burst my bands, and cry,
applaud!'
Then whispered she, 'The Bill is carrying
out!'
They heard, and, starting up, the Brood
of Night
Clapped hands, and shook with glee their
matted locks;
All Powers and Places that abhor the light
Joined in the transport, echoed back their
shout,
Hurrah for —, hugging his Ballot-box!

IV

[Composed 1838.—Published 1838.]

BLEST Statesman He, whose Mind's
unselfish will
Leaves him at ease among grand thoughts:
whose eye
Sees that, apart from magnanimity,
Wisdom exists not; nor the humbler skill
Of Prudence, disentangling good and ill
With patient care. What tho' assaults
run high,
They daunt not him who holds his
ministry,

¹ i.e. Grote.—ED.

Resolute, at all hazards, to fulfil
Its duties;—prompt to move, but firm to
wait,—
Knowing, things rashly sought are rarely
found;
That, for the functions of an ancient
State—
Strong by her charters, free because
imbound,
Servant of Providence, not slave of Fate—
Perilous is sweeping change, all chance
unsound.

V

IN ALLUSION TO VARIOUS RECENT HIS-
TORIES AND NOTICES OF THE FRENCH
REVOLUTION

[Composed ?—Published 1842.]

PORTENTOUS change when History can
appear
As the cool Advocate of foul device;
Reckless audacity extol, and jeer
At consciences perplexed with scruples
nice!
They who bewail not, must abhor, the
sneer
Born of Conceit, Power's blind Idolater;
Or haply sprung from vaunting Cowardice
Betrayed by mockery of holy fear.
Hath it not long been said the wrath of
Man
Works not the righteousness of God? Oh
bend,
Bend, ye Perverse! to judgments from
on High,
Laws that lay under Heaven's perpetual
ban
All principles of action that transcend
The sacred limits of humanity.

VI

CONTINUED

[Composed (?).—Published 1842.]

Who ponders National events shall find
An awful balancing of loss and gain,
Joy based on sorrow, good with ill com-
bined,
And proud deliverance issuing out of pain
And direful throes; as if the All-ruling
Mind,
With whose perfection it consists to
ordain
Volcanic burst, earthquake, and hurri-
cane,
Dealt in like sort with feeble human kind
By laws immutable. But woe for him
Who thus deceived shall lend an eager
hand
To social havoc. Is not Conscience ours,
And Truth, whose eye guilt only can
make dim;
And Will, whose office, by divine command,
Is to control and check disordered Powers?

SONNETS DEDICATED TO LIBERTY AND ORDER

VII

CONCLUDED

[Composed (?).—Published 1842.]

LONG-FAVoured England! be not thou misled

By monstrous theories of alien growth,
Lest alien frenzy seize thee, waxing
wroth,
Self-smitten till thy garments reek dyed
red

With thy own blood, which tears in
torrents shed

Fail to wash out, tears flowing ere thy
troth

Be plighted, not to ease but sullen sloth,
Or wan despair—the ghost of false hope
fled

Into a shameful grave. Among thy youth,
My Country! if such warning be held
dear,

Then shall a Veteran's heart be thrilled
with joy,

One who would gather from eternal truth,
For time and season, rules that work to
cheer—

Not scourge, to save the People—not
destroy.

VIII

[Composed 1839.—Published 1842.]

MEN of the Western World! in Fate's
dark book

Whence these opprobrious leaves of dire
portent?

Think ye your British Ancestors forsook
Their native Land, for outrage provident;
From unsubmitive necks the bridle
shook

To give, in their Descendants, freer vent
And wider range to passions turbulent,
To mutual tyranny a deadlier look?

Nay, said a voice, soft as the south wind's
breath,

Dive through the stormy surface of the
flood

To the great current flowing underneath;
Explore the countless springs of silent
good;

So shall the truth be better understood,
And thy grieved Spirit brighten strong
in faith.

IX

TO THE PENNSYLVANIANS

[Composed probably January or February, 1845.
—Published 1845.]

DAYS undefiled by luxury or sloth,
Firm self-denial, manners grave and staid,
Rights equal, laws with cheerfulness
obeyed,

Words that require no sanction from an
oath,

And simple honesty a common growth—

This high repute, with bounteous Nature's
aid,

Won confidence, now ruthlessly betrayed
At will, your power the measure of your
troth!—

All who revere the memory of Penn
Grieve for the land on whose wild woods
his name

Was fondly grafted with a virtuous aim,
Renounced, abandoned by degenerate
Men

For state-dishonour black as ever came
To upper air from Mammon's loathsome
den.

X

AT BOLOGNA, IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE LATE INSURRECTIONS, 1837

I

[Composed probably 1837.—Published: vol. c.
1842.]

AH why deceive ourselves! by no mere fit
Of sudden passion roused shall men attain
True freedom where for ages they have
lain

Bound in a dark abominable pit,
With life's best sinews more and more
unknit.

Here, there, a banded few who loathe the
chain

May rise to break it: effort worse than
vain

For thee, O great Italian nation, split
Into those jarring fractions.—Let thy
scope

Be one fixed mind for all; thy rights
approve

To thy own conscience gradually re-
newed;

Learn to make Time the father of wise
Hope;

Then trust thy cause to the arm of Forti-
tude,

The light of Knowledge, and the warmth
of Love.

XI

CONTINUED

II

[Composed probably 1837.—Published: vol. of
1842.]

HARD task! exclaim the undisciplined,
to lean

On Patience c^d, led with such slow en-
deavour,

That long-lived servitude must last for
ever.

Perish the grovelling few, who, prest
between

Wrongs and the terror of redress, would
wean

SONNETS DEDICATED TO LIBERTY AND ORDER

Millions from glorious aims. Our chains
to sever
Let us break forth in tempest now or
never!—

What, is there then no space for golden
mean
And gradual progress?—Twilight leads
to day,
And, even within the burning zones of
earth, 10
The hastiest sunrise yields a temperate
ray;
The softest breeze to fairest flowers gives
birth:
Think not that Prudence dwells in dark
abodes,
She scans the future with the eye of gods.

XII

CONCLUDED

III

[Composed probably 1837.—Published: vol. of
1842.]

As leaves are to the tree whereon they
grow
And wither, every human generation
Is to the Being of a mighty nation,
Locked in our world's embrace through
weal and woe;
Thought that should teach the zealot to
forego 5
Rash schemes, to abjure all selfish agita-
tion,
And seek through noiseless pains and
moderation
The unblemished good they only can
bestow.
Alas! with most, who weigh futurity
Against time present, passion holds the
scales: 10
Hence equal ignorance of both prevails,
And nations sink; or, struggling to be
free,
Are doomed to flounder on, like wounded
whales
Tossed on the bosom of a stormy sea.

XIII

[Composed January or February, 1845.—
Published 1845.]

YOUNG ENGLAND—what is then become
of Old,
Of dear Old England? Think they she is
dead,
Dead to the very name? Presumption fed
On empty air! That name will keep its
hold
In the true filial bosom's inmost fold 5
For ever.—The Spirit of Alfred, at the
head
Of all who for her rights watched, toiled
and bled,
Knows that this prophecy is not too bold.
What—how! shall she submit in will and
deed
To Beardless Boys—an imitative race, 10
The *servum pecus* of a Gallic breed?
Dear Mother! if thou *must* thy steps
retrace,
Go where at least meek Innocency dwells;
Let Babes and Sucklings be thy oracles.

XIV

[Composed (?).—Published 1842.]

FEEL for the wrongs to universal ken
Daily exposed, woe that unshrouded lies;
And seek the Sufferer in his darkest den,
Whether conducted to the spot by sighs
And moanings, or he dwells (as if the
wren 5
Taught him concealment) hidden from all
eyes
In silence and the awful modesties.
Of sorrow;—feel for all, as brother Men!
Rest not in hope want's icy chain to thaw
By casual boons and formal charities; 10
Learn to be just, just through impartial
law;
Far as ye may, erect and equalize;
And, what ye cannot reach by statute,
draw
Each from his fountain of self-sacrifice!

SONNETS UPON THE PUNISHMENT OF DEATH

IN SERIES

[Composed 1839-40.—Published December, 1841 (*Quarterly Review*); vol. of 1842.]

I

SUGGESTED BY THE VIEW OF LANCASTER
CASTLE (ON THE ROAD FROM THE SOUTH)
THIS Spot—at once unfolding sight so
fair
Of sea and land, with yon grey towers
that still
Rise up as if to lord it over air—
Might soothe in human breasts the sense
of ill,
Or charm it out of memory; yea, might
fill
The heart with joy and gratitude to God
For all his bounties upon man bestowed:
Why bears it then the name of 'Weeping
Hill'?
Thousands, as toward yon old Lancastrian
Towers,
A prison's crown, along this way they
past
For lingering durance or quick death
with shame,
From this bare eminence thereon have
cast
Their first look—blinded as tears fell in
showers
Shed on their chains; and hence that
doleful name.

II

TENDERLY do we feel by Nature's law
For worst offenders: though the heart
will heave
With indignation, deeply moved we
grieve,
In after-thought, for Him who stood in
awe
Neither of God nor man, and only saw,
Lost wretch, a horrible device enthroned
On proud temptations, till the victim
groaned
Under the steel his hand had dared to
draw.
But O, restrain compassion, if its course,
As oft befalls, prevent or turn aside
Judgments and aims and acts whose
higher source
Is sympathy with the unforewarned, who
died
Blameless—with them that shuddered
o'er his grave,
And all who from the law firm safety
crave.

III

THE Roman Consul doomed his sons to
die
Who had betrayed their country. The
stern word
Afforded (may it through all time afford)
A theme for praise and admiration high.
Upon the surface of humanity
He rested not; its depths his mind
explored;
He felt; but his parental bosom's lord
Was Duty,—Duty calmed his agony.
And some, we know, when they by wilful
act
A single human life have wrongly taken,
Pass sentence on themselves, confess the
fact,
And, to atone for it, with soul unshaken
Kneel at the feet of Justice, and, for faith
Broken with all mankind, solicit death.

IV

Is *Death*, when evil against good has
fought
With such fell mastery that a man may
dare
By deeds the blackest purpose to lay
bare—
Is *Death*, for one to that condition
brought,—
For him, or any one,—the thing that
ought
To be *most* dreaded? Lawgivers, beware,
Lest, capital pains remitting till ye spare
The murderer, ye, by sanction to that
thought,
Seemingly given, debase the general mind;
Tempt the vague will tried standards to
disown;
Nor only palpable restraints unbind,
But upon Honour's head disturb the
crown,
Whose absolute rule permits not to with-
stand
In the weak love of life his least command.

V

NOR to the object specially designed,
Howe'er momentous in itself it be,
Good to promote or curb depravity,
Is the wise Legislator's view confined.
His Spirit, when most severe, is oft most
kind;

SONNETS UPON THE PUNISHMENT OF DEATH

As all Authority in earth depends
On Love and Fear, their several powers
he blends,
Copying with awe the one Paternal
mind.
Uncaught by processes in show humane,
He feels how far the act would derogate
From even the humblest functions of the
State;
If she, self-shorn of Majesty, ordain
That never more shall hang upon her
breath
The last alternative of Life or Death.

VI

YE brood of Conscience—Spectres! that
frequent
The bad man's restless walk, and haunt
his bed—
Fiends in your aspect, yet beneficent
In act, as hovering Angels when they
spread
Their wings to guard the unconscious
Innocent—
Slow be the Statutes of the land to share
A laxity that could not but impair
Your power to punish crime, and so
prevent.
And ye, Beliefs! coiled serpent-like about
The adage on all tongues, 'Murder will
out,
How shall your ancient warnings work
for good
In the full might they hitherto have
shown,
If for deliberate shedder of man's blood
Survive not Judgment that requires his
own?

VII

BEFORE the world had past her time of
youth
While polity and discipline were weak,
The precept eye for eye, and tooth for
tooth,
Came forth—a light, though but as of
daybreak,
Strong as could then be borne. A Master
meek
Proscribed the spirit fostered by that rule,
Patience his law, long-suffering his school,
And love the end, which all through
peace must seek.
But lamentably do they err who strain
His mandates, given rash impulse to
control
And keep vindictive thirstings from the
soul,
So far that, if consistent in their scheme,
They must forbid the State to inflict a
pain,
Making of social order a mere dream.

VIII

FIT retribution, by the moral code
Determined, lies beyond the State's
embrace,
Yet, as she may, for each peculiar case
She plants well-measured terrors in the
road
Of wrongful acts. Downward it is and
broad,
And, the main fear once doomed to
banishment,
Far oftener then, bad ushering worse
event,
Blood would be spilt that in his dark
abode
Crime might lie better hid. And, should
the change
Take from the horror due to a foul deed,
Pursuit and evidence so far must fail,
And, guilt escaping, passion then might
plead
In angry spirits for her old free range,
And the 'wild justice of revenge' prevail.

IX

THOUGH to give timely warning and deter
Is one great aim of penalty, extend
Thy mental vision further and ascend
Far higher, else full surely shalt thou err.
What is a State? The wise behold in her
A creature born of time, that keeps one eye
Fixed on the statutes of Eternity,
To which her judgments reverently defer.
Speaking through Law's dispassionate
voice the State
Endues her conscience with external life
And being, to preclude or quell the strife
Of individual will, to elevate
The grovelling mind, the erring to recall,
And fortify the moral sense of all.

X

OUR bodily life, some plead, that life the
shrine
Of an immortal spirit, is a gift
So sacred, so informed with light divine,
That no tribunal, though most wise to sift
Deed and intent, should turn the Being
adrift
Into that world where penitential tear
May not avail, nor prayer have for God's
ear
A voice—that world whose veil no hand
can lift
For earthly sight. 'Eternity and Time,'
They urge, 'have interwoven claims and
rights
Not to be jeopardised through foulest
crime:
The sentence rule by mercy's heaven-born
lights.'
Even so; but measuring not by finite sense
Infinite Power, perfect Intelligence.

SONNETS UPON THE PUNISHMENT OF DEATH

XI

AH, think how one compelled for life to
 abide
 Locked in a dungeon needs must eat the
 heart
 Out of his own humanity, and part
 With every hope that mutual cares pro-
 vide;
 And, should a less unnatural doom
 confide 5
 In life-long exile on a savage coast,
 Soon the relapsing penitent may boast
 Of yet more heinous guilt, with fiercer
 pride.
 Hence thoughtful Mercy, Mercy sage and
 pure,
 Sanctions the forfeiture that Law de-
 mands, 10
 Leaving the final issue in *His* hands
 Whose goodness knows no change, whose
 love is sure,
 Who sees, foresees; who cannot judge
 amiss,
 And wafts at will the contrite soul to
 bliss.

XII

SEE the Condemned alone within his cell
 And prostrate at some moment when
 remorse
 Stings to the quick, and, with resistless
 force,
 Assaults the pride she strove in vain to
 quell.
 Then mark him, him who could so long
 rebel, 5
 The crime confessed, a kneeling Penitent
 Before the Altar, where the Sacrament
 Softens his heart, till from his eyes
 outwell
 Tears of salvation. Welcome death! while
 Heaven
 Does in this change exceedingly rejoice;
 While yet the solemn heed the State hath
 given 11
 Helps him to meet the last Tribunal's
 voice
 In faith, which fresh offences, were he
 cast
 On old temptations, might for ever blast.

XIII

CONCLUSION

YES, though He well may tremble at the
 sound
 Of his own voice, who from the judgment-
 seat
 Sends the pale Convict to his last retreat
 In death; though Listeners shudder all
 around,
 They know the dread requital's source
 profound; 5
 Nor is, they feel, its wisdom obsolete—
 (Would that it were!) the sacrifice unmeet
 For Christian Faith. But hopeful signs
 abound;
 The social rights of man breathe purer air;
 Religion deepens her preventive care; 10
 Then, moved by needless fear of past
 abuse,
 Strike not from Law's firm hand that
 awful rod,
 But leave it thence to drop for lack of use:
 Oh, speed the blessed hour, Almighty
 God!

XIV

APOLOGY

THE formal World relaxes her cold chain
 For One who speaks in numbers; ampler
 scope
 His utterance finds; and, conscious of the
 gain,
 Imagination works with bolder hope
 The cause of grateful reason to sustain; 5
 And, serving Truth, the heart more
 strongly beats
 Against all barriers which his labour
 meets
 In lofty place, or humble Life's domain.
 Enough;—before us lay a painful road,
 And guidance have I sought in duteous
 love 10
 From Wisdom's heavenly Father. Hence
 hath flowed
 Patience, with trust that, whatsoe'er the
 way
 Each takes in this high matter, all may
 move
 Cheered with the prospect of a brighter
 day.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

I EPISTLE

TO SIR GEORGE HOWLAND BEAUMONT, BART.
From the South-west Coast of Cumberland.—1811.
[Composed 1811.—Published: vol. of 1842.]

FAR from our home by Grasmere's quiet
Lake,
From the Vale's peace which all her
fields partake,
Here on the bleakest point of Cumbria's
shore

We sojourn stunned by Ocean's ceaseless
roar;

While, day by day, grim neighbour! huge
Black Comb

Frowns deepening visibly his native
gloom,

Unless, perchance rejecting in despite
What on the Plain we have of warmth
and light,

In his own storms he hides himself from
sight.

Rough is the time; and thoughts, that
would be free

From heaviness, oft fly, dear Friend, to
thee;

Turn from a spot where neither sheltered
road

Nor hedge-row screen invites my steps
abroad;

Where one poor Plane-tree, having as it
might

Attained a stature twice a tall man's
height,

Hopeless of further growth, and brown
and sere

Through half the summer, stands with
top cut sheer,

Like an unshifting weathercock which
proves

How cold the quarter that the wind best
loves,

Or like a Centinel that, evermore

Darkening the window, ill defends the door
Of this unfinished house—a Fortress bare,

Where strength has been the Builder's
only care;

Whose rugged walls may still for years
demand

The final polish of the Plasterer's hand.
—This Dwelling's Inmate more than three

weeks' space

And oft a Prisoner in the cheerless place,
I—of whose touch the fiddle would com-
plain,

Whose breath would labour at the flute in
vain,

In music all unversed, nor blessed with
skill

A bridge to copy, or to paint a mill,

Tired of my books, a scanty company!
And tired of listening to the boisterous
sea—

Pace between door and window mutter-
ing rhyme,

An old resource to cheat a froward time!
Though these dull hours (mine is it, or
their shame?)

Would tempt me to renounce that humble
aim.

—But if there be a Muse who, free to
take

Her seat upon Olympus, doth forsake
Those heights (like Phœbus when his
golden locks

He veiled, attendant on Thessalian flocks)
And, in disguise, a Milkmaid with her pail

Trips down the pathways of some winding
dale;

Or, like a Mermaid, warbles on the shores
To fishers mending nets beside their
doors;

Or, Pilgrim-like, on forest moss reclined,
Gives plaintive ditties to the heedless
wind,

Or listens to its play among the boughs
Above her head and so forgets her vows—

If such a Visitant of Earth there be
And she would deign this day to smile
on me

And aid my verse, content with local
bounds

Of natural beauty and life's daily rounds,
Thoughts, chances, sights, or doings,
which we tell

Without reserve to those whom we love
well—

Then haply, Beaumont! words in current
clear

Will flow, and on a welcome page appear
Duly before thy sight, unless they perish
here.

What shall I treat of? News from
Mona's Isle?

Such have we, but unvaried in its style;
No tales of Runagates fresh landed,
whence

And wherefore fugitive or on what pre-
tence;

Of feasts, or scandal, eddying like the
wind

Most restlessly alive when most confined.
Ask not of me, whose tongue can best
appease

The mighty tumults of the HOUSE OF
KEYS;

The last year's cup whose Ram or Heifer
gained,

What slopes are planted, or what mosses
drained:

An eye of fancy only can I cast
 On that proud pageant now at hand or
 past,⁷⁰
 When full five hundred boats in trim
 array,
 With nets and sails outspread and
 streamers gay,
 And chanted hymns and stiller voice of
 prayer,
 For the old Manx-harvest to the Deep
 repair,
 Soon as the herring-shoals at distance
 shine⁷⁵
 Like beds of moonlight shifting on the
 brine.

Mona from our Abode is daily seen,
 But with a wilderness of waves between;
 And by conjecture only can we speak
 Of aught transacted there in bay or creek;
 No tidings reach us thence from town or
 field,⁸¹
 Only faint news her mountain-sunbeams
 yield,
 And some we gather from the misty air,
 And some the hovering clouds, our tele-
 graph, declare.
 But these poetic mysteries I withhold; ⁸⁵
 For Fancy hath her fits both hot and
 cold,
 And should the colder fit with You be on
 When You might read, my credit would
 be gone.

—Let more substantial themes the pen
 engage,
 And nearer interests culled from the
 opening stage⁹⁰
 Of our migration.—Ere the welcome dawn
 Had from the east her silver star with-
 drawn,
 The Wain stood ready, at our Cottage-
 door,
 Thoughtfully freighted with a various
 store;
 And long or ere the uprising of the Sun
 O'er dew-damp'd dust our journey was
 begun,⁹⁶
 A needful journey, under favouring skies,
 Thro'ing peopled Vales; yet something
 in the guise
 Of those old Patriarchs when from well
 to well
 They roamed through Wastes where now
 the tented Arabs dwell.¹⁰⁰

Say first, to whom did we the charge
 confide,
 Who promptly undertook the Wain to
 guide
 Up many a sharply-twining road and
 down,
 And over many a wide hill's craggy
 crown,

Through the quick turns of many a hollow
 nook,¹⁰⁵
 And the rough bed of many an unbridged
 brook?
 A blooming Lass—who in her better hand
 Bore a light switch, her sceptre of com-
 mand
 When, yet a slender Girl, she often led,
 Skilful and bold, the horse and burthened
 sled!¹¹⁰
 From the peat-yielding Moss on Gowdar's
 head.
 What could go wrong with such a
 Charioteer
 For goods and chattels, or those Infants
 dear,
 A Pair who smilingly sat side by side,
 Our hope confirming that the salt-sea
 tide,¹¹⁵
 Whose free embraces we were bound to
 seek,
 Would their lost strength restore and
 freshen the pale cheek?
 Such hope did either Parent entertain
 Pacing behind along the silent lane.

Blithe hopes and happy musings soon
 took flight,¹²⁰
 For lo! an uncouth melancholy sight—
 On a green bank a creature stood forlorn
 Just half protruded to the light of morn,
 Its hinder part concealed by hedge-row
 thorn.
 The Figure called to mind a beast of prey
 Stript of its frightful powers by slow
 decay,¹²⁶
 And, though no longer upon rapine bent,
 Dim memory keeping of its old intent.
 We started, looked again with anxious
 eyes,
 And in that griesly object recognise ¹³⁰
 The Curate's Dog—his long-tried friend,
 for they,
 As well we knew, together had grown
 grey.
 The Master died, his drooping servant's
 grief
 Found at the Widow's feet some sad
 relief;
 Yet still he lived in pining discontent,
 Sadness which no indulgence could pre-
 vent;¹³⁶
 Hence whole day wanderings, broken
 nightly sleeps
 And lonesome watch that out of doors he
 keeps;
 Not oftentimes, I trust, as we, poor brute!
 Espied him on his legs sustained, blank,
 mute,¹⁴⁰
 And of all visible motion destitute,
 So that the very heaving of his breath
 Seemed stopt, though by some other
 power than death.

¹ A local word for sledges.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

Long as we gazed upon the form and face,
A mild domestic pity kept its place, 145
Unscared by thronging fancies of strange
hue
That haunted us in spite of what we
knew.
Even now I sometimes think of him as lost
In second-sight appearances, or crost
By spectral shapes of guilt, or to the
ground, 150
On which he stood, by spells unnatural
bound,
Like a gaunt shaggy Porter forced to wait
In days of old romance at Archimago's
gate.

Advancing Summer, Nature's law fulfilled, 154
The choristers in every grove had stilled;
But we, we lacked not music of our own,
For lightsome Fanny had thus early
thrown,
Mid the gay prattle of those infant
tongues,
Some notes prelusive, from the round of
songs
With which, more zealous than the liveliest bird 160
That in wild Arden's brakes was ever
heard,
Her work and her work's partners she
can cheer,
The whole day long, and all days of the
year.

Thus gladdened from our own dear
Vale we pass
And soon approach Diana's Looking-
glass! 165
To Loughrigg-tarn, round clear and bright
as heaven,
Such name Italian fancy would have
given,
Ere on its banks the few grey cabins rose
That yet disturb not its concealed repose
More than the feeblest wind that idly
blows. 170

Ah, Beaumont! when an opening in
the road
Stopped me at once by charm of what it
showed,
The encircling region vividly exprest
Within the mirror's depth, a world at
rest—
Sky streaked with purple, grove and
craggy *bield*,¹ 175
And the smooth green of many a pendent
field,
And, quieted and soothed, a torrent
small,
A little daring would-be waterfall,

¹ A word common in the country, signifying shelter, as in Scotland.

One chimney smoking and its azure
wreath,
Associate all in the calm Pool beneath,
With here and there a faint imperfect
gleam 181
Of water-lilies veiled in misty steam—
What wonder at this hour of stillness
deep,
A shadowy link 'tween wakefulness and
sleep,
When Nature's self, amid such blending,
seems 185
To render visible her own soft dreams,
If, mixed with what appeared of rock,
lawn, wood,
Fondly embosomed in the tranquil flood,
A glimpse I caught of that Abode, by
Thee
Designed to rise in humble privacy, 190
A lowly Dwelling, here to be outspread,
Like a small Hamlet, with its bashful
head
Half hid in native trees. Alas 'tis not,
Nor ever was; I sighed, and left the spot
Unconscious of its own untoward lot,
And thought in silence, with regret too
keen, 196
Of unexperienced joys that might have
been;
Of neighbourhood and intermingling arts,
And golden summer days uniting cheerful
hearts.
But time, irrevocable time, is flown, 200
And let us utter thanks for blessings
sown
And reaped—what hath been, and what
is, our own.

Not far we travelled ere a shout of glee,
Startling us all, dispersed my reverie;
Such shout as many a sportive echo meeting
ing 205
Oft-times from Alpine *chalets* sends a
greeting.
Whence the blithe hail? behold a Peasant
stand
On high, a kerchief waving in her hand!
Not unexpectant that by early day
Our little Band would thrird this mountain-way, 210
Before her cottage on the bright hill-side
She hath advanced with hope to be
descried.
Right gladly answering signals we displayed,
Moving along a tract of morning shade,
And vocal wishes sent of like good will
To our kind Friend high on the sunny
hill— 216
Luminous region, fair as if the prime
Were tempting all astir to look aloft or
climb;
Only the centre of the shining cot
With door left open makes a gloomy spot,

Emblem of those dark corners sometimes
found²²¹
Within the happiest breast on earthly
ground.

Rich prospect left behind of stream
and vale,
And mountain-tops, a barren ridge we scale;
Descend and reach, in Yewdale's depths,
a plain²²⁵
With haycocks studded, striped with
yellowing grain—

An area level as a Lake and spread
Under a rock too steep for man to tread,
Where sheltered from the north and bleak
north-west

Aloft the Raven hangs a visible nest,²³⁰
Fearless of all assaults that would her
brood molest.

Hot sunbeams fill the steaming vale; but
hark,

At our approach, a jealous watch-dog's
bark,

Noise that brings forth no liveried Page
of state,

But the whole household, that our
coming wait.²³⁵

With Young and Old warm greetings we
exchange,

And jocund smiles, and toward the lowly
Grange

Press forward by the teasing dogs
unscared.

Entering, we find the morning meal pre-
pared:

So down we sit, though not till each had
cast²⁴⁰

Pleased looks around the delicate repast—
Rich cream, and snow-white eggs fresh
from the nest,

With amber honey from the mountain's
breast;

Strawberries from lane or woodland,
offering wild²⁴⁴

Of children's industry, in hillocks piled;
Cakes for the nonce, and butter fit to lie
Upon a lordly dish; frank hospitality

Where simple art with bounteous nature
vied,

And cottage comfort shunned not seemly
pride.

Kind Hostess! Handmaid also of the
feast,²⁵⁰

If thou be lovelier than the kindling East,
Words by thy presence unrestrained may
speak

Of a perpetual dawn from brow and cheek
Instinct with light whose sweetest pro-
mise lies,²⁵⁴

Never retiring, in thy large dark eyes,
Dark but to every gentle feeling true,
As if their lustre flowed from ether's
purest blue.

Let me not ask what tears may have
been wept

By those bright eyes, what weary vigils
kept,

Beside that hearth what sighs may have
been heaved²⁶⁰

For wounds inflicted, nor what toil
relieved

By fortitude and patience, and the grace
Of heaven in pity visiting the place.

Not unadvisedly those secret springs
I leave unsearched: enough that memory
clings,²⁶⁵

Here as elsewhere, to notices that make
Their own significance for hearts awake,

To rural incidents, whose genial powers
Filled with delight three summer morn-
ing hours.

More could my pen report of grave or
gay²⁷⁰

That through our gipsy travel cheered the
way;

But, bursting forth above the waves, the
Sun

Laughs at my pains, and seems to say,
'Be done.'

Yet, Beaumont, thou wilt not, I trust,
reprove

This humble offering made by Truth to
Love,²⁷⁵

Nor chide the Muse that stooped to break
a spell

Which might have else been on me yet:—
FAREWELL.

UPON PERUSING THE FOREGOING EPISTLE THIRTY YEARS AFTER ITS COMPOSITION

[Composed 1841.—Published: vol. of 1842.]

SOON did the Almighty Giver of all rest
Take those dear young Ones to a fearless
nest;

And in Death's arms has long reposed the
Friend

For whom this simple Register was
penned.

Thanks to the moth that spared it for
our eyes;

And Stranger; even the slighted Scroll
may prize,⁵

Moved by the touch of kindred sym-
pathies.

For—save the calm repentance sheds o'er
strife

Raised by remembrances of misused life,
The light from past endeavours purely
willed¹⁰

And by Heaven's favour happily fulfilled;
Save hope that we, yet bound to Earth,
may share

The joys of the Departed—what so fair

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

As blameless pleasure, not without some
tears,
Reviewed through Love's transparent veil
of years? 15

Note.—LOUGHRIGG TARN, alluded to in the foregoing Epistle, resembles, though much smaller in compass, the Lake Nemi, or *Speculum Diane* as it is often called, not only in its clear waters and circular form, and the beauty immediately surrounding it, but also as being overlooked by the eminence of Langdale Pikes as Lake Nemi is by that of Monte Calvo. Since this Epistle was written Loughrigg Tarn has lost much of its beauty by the felling of many natural clumps of wood, relics of the old forest, particularly upon the farm called 'The Oaks,' from the abundance of that tree which grew there.

It is to be regretted, upon public grounds, that Sir George Beaumont did not carry into effect his intention of constructing here a Summer Retreat in the style I have described; as his taste would have set an example how buildings, with all the accommodations modern society requires, might be introduced even into the most secluded parts of this country without injuring their native character. The design was not abandoned from failure of inclination on his part, but in consequence of local untowardness which need not be particularised.

II GOLD AND SILVER FISHES IN A VASE

[Composed 1829.—Published 1835.]

The soaring lark is blest as proud
When at heaven's gate she sings;
The roving bee proclaims aloud
Her flight by vocal wings;
While Ye, in lasting durance pent,
Your silent lives employ
For something more than dull content,
Though haply less than joy.

Yet might your glassy prison seem
A place where joy is known,
Where golden flash and silver gleam
Have meanings of their own;
While, high and low, and all about,
Your motions, glittering Elves!
Ye weave—no danger from without,
And peace among yourselves.

Type of a sunny human breast
Is your transparent cell;
Where Fear is but a transient guest,
No sullen Humours dwell;
Where, sensitive of every ray
That smites this tiny sea,
Your scaly panoplies repay
The loan with usury.

How beautiful!—Yet none knows why
This ever-graceful change,
Renewed—renewed incessantly—
Within your quiet range.

Is it that ye with conscious skill
For mutual pleasure glide;
And sometimes, not without your will,
Are dwarfed, or magnified? 30

Fays, Genii of gigantic size!
And now, in twilight dim,
Clustering like constellated eyes
In wings of Cherubim, 35
When the fierce orbs abate their glare;—
Whate'er your forms express,
Whate'er ye seem, whate'er ye are—
All leads to gentleness. 40

Cold though your nature be, 'tis pure;
Your birthright is a fence
From all that haughtier kinds endure
Through tyranny of sense.
Ah! not alone by colours bright 45
Are Ye to heaven allied,
When, like essential Forms of light,
Ye mingle, or divide.

For day-dreams soft as e'er beguiled
Day-thoughts while limbs repose; 50
For moonlight fascinations mild,
Your gift, ere shutters close—
Accept, mute Captives! thanks and praise;
And may this tribute prove
That gentle admirations raise 55
Delight resembling love.

III LIBERTY

SEQUEL TO THE PRECEDING

Addressed to a friend; the gold and silver fishes
having been removed to a pool in the pleasure-
ground of Rydal Mount.

'The liberty of a people consists in being governed
by laws which they have made for themselves,
under whatever form it be of government. The
liberty of a private man, in being master of his
own time and actions, as far as may consist with
the laws of God and of his country. Of this latter
we are here to discourse.'—COWLEY.

[Composed 1829.—Published 1835.]

THOSE breathing Tokens of your kind
regard,
(Suspect not, Anna, that their fate is
hard;
Not soon does aught to which mild fancies
cling
In lonely spots, become a slighted thing;) 5
Those silent Inmates now no longer share,
Nor do they need, our hospitable care, 6
Removed in kindness from their glassy
Cell
To the fresh waters of a living Well—
An elfin pool so sheltered that its rest
No winds disturb; the mirror of whose
breast 10
Is smooth as clear, save where with
dimples small
A fly may settle, or a blossom fall.

—There swims, of blazing sun and beating
shower

Fearless (but how obscured!) the golden
Power, 14

That from his bauble prison used to cast
Gleams by the richest jewel unsurpass;
And near him, darkling like a sullen
Gnome,

The silver Tenant of the crystal dome;
Dissevered both from all the mysteries
Of hue and altering shape that charmed
all eyes, 20

Alas! they pined, they languished while
they shone;

And, if not so, what matters beauty gone
And admiration lost, by change of place
That brings to the inward creature no
disgrace? 25

But if the change restore his birthright,
then, 25

Whate'er the difference, boundless is the
gain.

Who can divine what impulses from God
Reach the caged lark, within a town-
abode,

From his poor inch or two of daisied sod?
O yield him back his privilege!—No sea
Swells like the bosom of a man set free;
A wilderness is rich with liberty. 32

Roll on, ye spouting whales, who die or
keep

Your independence in the fathomless
Deep!

Spread, tiny nautilus, the living sail; 35
Dive, at thy choice, or brave the freshening
gale!

If unproved the ambitious eagle mount
Sunward to seek the daylight in its fount,
Bays, gulfs, and ocean's Indian width,
shall be, 39

Till the world perishes, a field for thee!

While musing here I sit in shadow cool,
And watch these mute Companions, in
the pool,

(Among reflected boughs of leafy trees)
By glimpses caught—disporting at their
ease,

Enlivened, braced, by hardy luxuries, 45
I ask what warrant fixed them (like a
spell

Of witchcraft fixed them) in the crystal
cell;

To wheel with languid motion round and
round,

Beautiful, yet in mournful durance bound.
Their peace, perhaps, our lightest footfall
marred; 50

On their quick sense our sweetest music
jarred;

And whither could they dart, if seized
with fear?

No sheltering stone, no tangled root was
near.

When fire or taper ceased to cheer the
room,

They wore away the night in starless
gloom; 55

And when the sun first dawned upon the
streams,

How faint their portion of his vital beams!
Thus, and unable to complain, they fared,
While not one joy of ours by them was
shared.

Is there a cherished bird (I venture
now 60

To snatch a sprig from Chaucer's reverend
brow)—

Is there a brilliant fondling of the cage,
Though sure of plaudits on his costly
stage,

Though fed with dainties from the snow-
white hand

Of a kind mistress, fairest of the land, 65
But gladly would escape; and, if need
were,

Scatter the colours from the plumes that
bear

The emancipated captive through blithe
air

Into strange woods, where he at large
may live

On best or worst which they and Nature
give? 70

The beetle loves his unpretending track,
The snail the house he carries on his
back;

The far-fetched worm with pleasure would
disown

The bed we give him, though of softest
down;

A noble instinct; in all kinds the same,
All ranks! What Sovereign, worthy of
the name, 76

If doomed to breathe against his lawful
will

An element that flatters him—to kill,
But would rejoice to barter outward
show

For the least boon that freedom can
bestow? 80

But most the Bard is true to inborn
right,

Lark of the dawn, and Philomel of night,
Exults in freedom, can with rapture vouch
For the dear blessings of a lowly couch,

A natural meal—days, months, from
Nature's hand; 85

Time, place, and business, all at his com-
mand!—

Who bends to happier duties, who more
wise

Than the industrious Poet, taught to
prize,

Above all grandeur, a pure life uncrossed
By cares in which simplicity is lost? 90

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

That life—the flowery path that winds by
stealth—

Which Horace needed for his spirit's
health;

Sighed for, in heart and genius, overcome
By noise and strife, and questions wearisome,

And the vain splendours of Imperial
Rome?— 95

Let easy mirth his social hours inspire,
And fiction animate his sportive lyre,
Attuned to verse that, crowning light
Distress

With garlands, cheats her into happiness;
Give me the humblest note of those sad
strains 100

Drawn forth by pressure of his gilded
chains,
As a chance-sunbeam for his memory
fell

Upon the Sabine farm he loved so well;
Or when the prattle of Bandusia's spring
Haunted his ear—he only listening— 105
He proud to please, above all rivals, fit
To win the palm of gaiety and wit;
He, doubt not, with involuntary dread,
Shrinking from each new favour to be
shed,
By the world's Ruler, on his honoured
head! 110

In a deep vision's intellectual scene,
Such earnest longings and regrets as keen
Depressed the melancholy Cowley, laid
Under a fancied yew-tree's luckless
shade;

A doleful bower for penitential song, 115
Where Man and Muse complained of
mutual wrong;

While Cam's ideal current glided by,
And antique towers nodded their fore-
heads high,

Citadels dear to studious privacy.
But Fortune, who had long been used to
sport 120

With this tried Servant of a thankless
Court,

Relenting met his wishes; and to you
The remnant of his days at least was true;
You, whom, though long deserted, he
loved best;

You, Muses, books, fields, liberty, and
rest! 125

Far happier they who, fixing hope and
aim

On the humanities of peaceful fame,
Enter betimes with more than martial fire
The generous course, aspire, and still
aspire;

Upheld by warnings heeded not too late
Stifle the contradictions of their fate, 131
And to one purpose cleave, their Being's
godlike mate!

Thus, gifted Friend, but with the placid
brow

That woman ne'er should forfeit, keep thy
vow;

With modest scorn reject whate'er would
blind 135

The ethereal eyesight, cramp the winged
mind!

Then, with a blessing granted from above
To every act, word, thought, and look of
love,

Life's book for Thee may lie unclosed, till
age

Shall with a thankful tear bedrop its latest
page.¹ 140

IV

POOR ROBIN²

[Composed March, 1840.—Published: vol. of
1842.]

Now when the primrose makes a splendid
show,

And lilies face the March-winds in full
blow,

And humbler growths as moved with one
desire

Put on, to welcome spring, their best attire,
Poor Robin is yet flowerless; but how
gay 5

With his red stalks upon this sunny day!
And, as his tufts of leaves he spreads,
content

With a hard bed and scanty nourishment,
Mixed with the green, some shine not
lacking power

To rival summer's brightest scarlet flower;
And flowers they well might seem to
passers-by 11

If looked at only with a careless eye;
Flowers—or a richer produce (did it suit
The season) sprinklings of ripe strawberry
fruit.

But while a thousand pleasures come
unsought, 15

Why fix upon his wealth or want a
thought?

¹ There is now, alas! no possibility of the anticipation, with which the above Epistle concludes, being realised: nor were the verses ever seen by the Individual for whom they were intended. She accompanied her husband, the Rev. Wm. Fletcher, to India, and died of cholera, at the age of thirty-two or thirty-three years, on her way from Shalapore to Bombay, deeply lamented by all who knew her.

Her enthusiasm was ardent, her piety steadfast; and her great talents would have enabled her to be eminently useful in the difficult path of life to which she had been called. The opinion she entertained of her own performances, given to the world under her maiden name, Jewsbury, was modest and humble, and, indeed, far below their merits; as is often the case with those who are making trial of their powers, with a hope to discover what they are best fitted for. In one quality, viz. quickness in the motions of her mind, she had, within the range of the Author's acquaintance, no equal.

² The small wild Geranium known by that term.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

Is the string touched in prelude to a lay
Of pretty fancies that would round him
play

When all the world acknowledged elfin
sway? 19

Or does it suit our humour to commend
Poor Robin as a sure and crafty friend,
Whose practice teaches, spite of names to
show

Bright colours whether they deceive or
no?—

Nay, we would simply praise the free
good-will

With which, though slighted, he, on naked
hill 25

Or in warm valley, seeks his part to fill;
Cheerful alike if bare of flowers as now,
Or when his tiny gems shall deck his brow:
Yet more, we wish that men by men
despised,

And such as lift their foreheads over-
prized, 30

Should sometimes think, where'er they
chance to spy

This child of Nature's own humility,
What recompense is kept in store or left
For all that seem neglected or bereft;
With what nice care equivalents are given,
How just, how bountiful, the hand of
Heaven. 36

V

THE GLEANER

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE

[Composed 1828.—Published, as 'The Country
Girl,' 1829 (*The Keepsake*); ed. 1832.]

THAT happy gleam of vernal eyes,
Those locks from summer's golden skies,
That o'er thy brow are shed;

That cheek—a kindling of the morn,
That lip—a rose-bud from the thorn, 5

I saw; and Fancy sped
To scenes Arcadian, whispering, through
soft air,

Of bliss that grows without a care,
And happiness that never flies—

(How can it where love never dies?) 10
Whispering of promise, where no blight
can reach the innocent delight;

Where pity, to the mind conveyed
In pleasure, is the darkest shade

That Time, unwrinkled grandire, flings
From his smoothly gliding wings. 16

What mortal form, what earthly face
Inspired the pencil, lines to trace,

And mingle colours, that should breed
Such rapture, nor want power to feed; 20

For had thy charge been idle flowers,
Fair Damsel! o'er my captive mind,

To truth and sober reason blind,

'Mid that soft air, those long-lost bowers,
The sweet illusion might have hung, for
hours. 25

Thanks to this tell-tale sheaf of corn,
That touchingly bespeaks thee born
Life's daily tasks with them to share
Who, whether from their lowly bed
They rise, or rest the weary head, 30
Ponder the blessing they entreat
From Heaven, and *feel* what they repeat,
While they give utterance to the prayer
That asks for daily bread.

VI

TO A REDBREAST

(IN SICKNESS)

[Composed (?).—Published: vol. of 1842.]

STAY, little cheerful Robin! stay,
And at my casement sing,
Though it should prove a farewell lay
And this our parting spring.

Though I, alas! may ne'er enjoy 5
The promise in thy song;
A charm, *that* thought can not destroy,
Doth to thy strain belong.

Methinks that in my dying hour
Thy song would still be dear, 10
And with a more than earthly power
My passing Spirit cheer.

Then, little Bird, this boon confer,
Come, and my requiem sing,
Nor fail to be the harbinger 15
Of everlasting Spring.

S. H.

VII

[Composed 1846.—Published 1850.]

I KNOW an aged Man constrained to dwell
In a large house of public charity,
Where he abides, as in a Prisoner's cell,
With numbers near, alas! no company.

When he could creep about, at will,
though poor 5

And forced to live on alms, this old Man
fed

A Redbreast, one that to his cottage door
Came not, but in a lane partook his bread.

There, at the root of one particular tree,
An easy seat this worn-out Labourer
found 10

While Robin pecked the crumbs upon his
knee

Laid one by one, or scattered on the
ground.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

Dear intercourse was theirs, day after day;

What signs of mutual gladness when they met!

Think of their common peace, their simple play, 15

The parting moment and its fond regret.

Months passed in love that failed not to fulfil,

In spite of season's change, its own demand,

By fluttering pinions here and busy bill;
There by caresses from a tremulous hand.

Thus in the chosen spot a tie so strong 21
Was formed between the solitary pair,

That when his fate had housed him 'mid a throng

The Captive shunned all converse proffered there.

Wife, children, kindred, they were dead and gone; 25

But, if no evil hap his wishes crossed,
One living Stay was left, and on that one

Some recompense for all that he had lost.

O that the good old Man had power to prove,

By message sent through air or visible token, 30

That still he loves the Bird, and still must love;

That friendship lasts though fellowship is broken!

VIII

SONNET

TO AN OCTOGENARIAN

[Composed 1846.—Published 1850.]

AFFECTIONS lose their object; Time brings forth

No successors; and, lodged in memory,
If love exist no longer, it must die,—

Wanting accustomed food, must pass from earth,

Or never hope to reach a second birth. 5
This sad belief, the happiest that is left

To thousands, share not Thou; howe'er bereft,

Scorned, or neglected, fear not such a dearth.

Though poor and destitute of friends thou art,

Perhaps the sole survivor of thy race, 10
One to whom Heaven assigns that mournful part

The utmost solitude of age to face,
Still shall be left some corner of the heart

Where Love for living Thing can find a place.

IX

FLOATING ISLAND

These lines are by the Author of the Address to the Wind, &c., published heretofore along with my poems. Those to a Redbreast are by a deceased female Relative.

[Composed ?—Published: vol. of 1842.]

HARMONIOUS Powers with Nature work
On sky, earth, river, lake and sea;

Sunshine and cloud, whirlwind and breeze,

All in one duteous task agree.

Once did I see a slip of earth 5
(By throbbing waves long undermined)

Loosed from its hold; how, no one knew,
But all might see it float, obedient to the

wind;

Might see it, from the mossy shore
Dissevered, float upon the Lake, 10

Float with its crest of trees adorned
On which the warbling birds their pastime take.

Food, shelter, safety, there they find;
There berries ripen, flowerets bloom;

There insects live their lives, and die; 15
A peopled world it is; in size a tiny room.

And thus through many seasons' space
This little Island may survive;

But Nature, though we mark her not,
Will take away, may cease to give. 20

Perchance when you are wandering forth
Upon some vacant sunny day,

Without an object, hope, or fear,
Thither your eyes may turn—the Isle is

passed away;

Buried beneath the glittering Lake, 25
Its place no longer to be found;

Yet the lost fragments shall remain
To fertilise some other ground.

D. W.

X

[Composed (?).—Published 1850.]

How beautiful the Queen of Night, on high

Her way pursuing among scattered clouds,
Where, ever and anon, her head she

shrouds
Hidden from view in dense obscurity.

But look, and to the watchful eye 5
A brightening edge will indicate that soon

We shall behold the struggling Moon
Break forth,—again to walk the clear blue

sky.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

XI

'Late, late yestreen I saw the new moone
Wi' the auld moone in hir arme'
*Ballad of Sir Patrick Spence,
Percy's Reliques.*

[Composed 1826.—Published 1827.]

ONCE I could hail (howe'er serene the sky)
The Moon re-entering her monthly
round,
No faculty yet given me to espy
The dusky Shape within her arms im-
bound,
That thin memento of effulgence lost
Which some have named her Prede-
cessor's ghost.

Young, like the Crescent that above me
shone,
Nought I perceived within it dull or dim;
All that appeared was suitable to One
Whose fancy had a thousand fields to
skim;
To expectations spreading with wild
growth,
And hope that kept with me her plighted
troth.

I saw (ambition quickening at the view)
A silver boat launched on a boundless
flood;
A pearly crest, like Dian's when it threw
Its brightest splendour round a leafy
wood;
But not a hint from under-ground, no sign
Fit for the glimmering brow of Proserpine.

Or was it Dian's self that seemed to
move
Before me?—nothing blemished the fair
sight;
On her I looked whom jocund Fairies
love,
Cynthia, who puts the little stars to flight,
And by that thinning magnifies the great,
For exaltation of her sovereign state.

And when I learned to mark the spectral
Shape
As each new Moon obeyed the call of
Time,
If gloom fell on me, swift was my escape;
Such happy privilege hath life's gay
Prime,
To see or not to see, as best may please
A buoyant Spirit, and a heart at ease.

Now, dazzling Stranger! when thou
meet'st my glance,
Thy dark Associate ever I discern;
Emblem of thoughts too eager to advance
While I salute my joys, thoughts sad or
stern;
Shades of past bliss, or phantoms that, to
gain
Their fill of promised lustre, wait in vain.

So changes mortal Life with fleeting
years;
A mournful change, should Reason fail
to bring
The timely insight that can temper fears,
And from vicissitude remove its sting;
While Faith aspires to seats in that
domain
Where joys are perfect—neither wax nor
wane.

XII

TO THE LADY FLEMING

ON SEEING THE FOUNDATION PREPARING
FOR THE ERECTION OF RYDAL CHAPEL,
WESTMORELAND

[Composed 1823.—Published 1827.]

I

BLEST is this Isle—our native Land;
Where battlement and moated gate
Are objects only for the hand
Of hoary Time to decorate;
Where shady hamlet, town that breathes
Its busy smoke in social wreaths,
No rampart's stern defence require,
Nought but the heaven-directed spire,
And steeple tower (with pealing bells
Far-heard)—our only citadels.

II

O Lady! from a noble line
Of chieftains sprung, who stoutly bore
The spear, yet gave to works divine
A bounteous help in days of yore,
(As records mouldering in the Dell
Of Nightshade¹ haply yet may tell;) ¹⁵
Thee kindred aspirations moved
To build, within a vale beloved,
For Him upon whose high behests
All peace depends, all safety rests. ²⁰

III

How fondly will the woods embrace
This daughter of thy pious care,
Lifting her front with modest grace
To make a fair recess more fair;
And to exalt the passing hour; ²⁵
Or soothe it with a healing power
Drawn from the Sacrifice fulfilled,
Before this rugged soil was tilled,
Or human habitation rose
To interrupt the deep repose! ³⁰

IV

Well may the villagers rejoice!
Nor heat, nor cold, nor weary ways,
Will be a hindrance to the voice
That would unite in prayer and praise;
More duly shall wild wandering Youth
Receive the curb of sacred truth, ³⁶

¹ Bekangs Ghyll—or the dell of Nightshade—in
which stands St. Mary's Abbey in Low Furness.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

Shall tottering Age, bent earthward, hear
The Promise, with uplifted ear;
And all shall welcome the new ray
Imparted to their sabbath-day.

Should move the tenor of *his* song
Who means to charity no wrong;
Whose offering gladly would accord
With this day's work, in thought and
word.

V

Nor deem the Poet's hope misplaced,
His fancy cheated—that can see
A shade upon the future cast,
Of time's pathetic sanctity;
Can hear the monitory clock
Sound o'er the lake with gentle shock
At evening, when the ground beneath
Is ruffled o'er with cells of death;
Where happy generations lie,
Here tutored for eternity.

Heaven prosper it! may peace, and love,
And hope, and consolation, fall,
Through its meek influence, from above,
And penetrate the hearts of all;
All who, around the hallowed Fane,
Shall sojourn in this fair domain;
Grateful to Thee, while service pure,
And ancient ordinance, shall endure,
For opportunity bestowed
To kneel together, and adore their God!

VI

Lives there a man whose sole delights
Are trivial pomp and city noise,
Hardening a heart that loathes or slights
What every natural heart enjoys?
Who never caught a noon-tide dream
From murmur of a running stream;
Could strip, for aught the prospect yields
To him, their verdure from the fields;
And take the radiance from the clouds
In which the sun his setting shrouds.

VII

A soul so pitifully forlorn,
If such do on this earth abide,
May season apathy with scorn,
May turn indifference to pride;
And still be not unblest—compared
With him who grovels, self-debarred
From all that lies within the scope
Of holy faith and Christian hope;
Or, shipwrecked, kindles on the coast
False fires, that others may be lost.

VIII

Alas! that such perverted zeal
Should spread on Britain's favoured
ground!
That public order, private weal,
Should e'er have felt or feared a wound
From champions of the desperate law
Which from their own blind hearts they
draw;
Who tempt their reason to deny
God, whom their passions dare defy,
And boast that they alone are free
Who reach this dire extremity!

IX

But turn we from these 'bold bad' men;
The way, mild Lady! that hath led
Down to their 'dark opprobrious den,'
Is all too rough for Thee to tread.
Softly as morning vapours glide
Down Rydal-cove from Fairfield's side,

Mindful of Him Who in the Orient born
There lived, and on the cross His life
resigned,
And Who, from out the regions of the
morn,
Issuing in pomp, shall come to judge
mankind.

XIII

ON THE SAME OCCASION

Oh! gather whencesoe'er ye safely may
The help which slackening Piety requires;
Nor deem that he perforce must go astray
Who treads upon the footmarks of his sires.
Our churches, invariably perhaps, stand east and
west, but *why* is by few persons *exactly* known;
nor, that the degree of deviation from *due* east
often noticeable in the ancient ones was deter-
mined, in each particular case, by the point in
the horizon, at which the sun rose upon the day
of the saint to whom the church was dedicated.
These observances of our ancestors, and the
causes of them, are the subject of the following
stanzas.

[Composed 1823.—Published 1827.]

WHEN in the antique age of bow and spear
And feudal rapine clothed with iron mail,
Came ministers of peace, intent to rear
The Mother Church in yon sequestered
vale;

Then, to her Patron Saint a previous rite
Resounded with deep swell and solemn
close,
Through unremitting vigils of the night,
Till from his couch the wished-for Sun
uprose.

He rose, and straight—as by divine com-
mand,
They, who had waited for that sign to
trace
Their work's foundation, gave with care-
ful hand
To the high altar its determined place;

So taught *their* creed;—nor failed the
eastern sky,
'Mid these more awful feelings, to infuse
The sweet and natural hopes that shall
not die,
Long as the sun his gladsome course
renews. 20

For us hath such prelusive vigil ceased;
Yet still we plant, like men of elder days
Our Christian altar faithful to the east,
Whence the tall window drinks the morn-
ing rays;

That obvious emblem giving to the eye
Of meek devotion, which erewhile it gave,
That symbol of the day-spring from on
high, 27
Triumphant o'er the darkness of the grave.

XIV

THE HORN OF EGREMONT CASTLE

[Composed 1806.—Published 1807.]

ERE the Brothers through the gateway
Issued forth with old and young,
To the Horn Sir Eustace pointed
Which for ages there had hung.
Horn it was which none could sound, 5
No one upon living ground,
Save He who came as rightful Heir
To Egremont's Domains and Castle fair.

Heirs from times of earliest record
Had the House of Lucie born, 10
Who of right had held the Lordship
Claimed by proof upon the Horn:
Each at the appointed hour
Tried the Horn,—it owned his power;
He was acknowledged: and the blast, 15
Which good Sir Eustace sounded, was
the last.

With his lance Sir Eustace pointed,
And to Hubert thus said he,
'What I speak this Horn shall witness
For thy better memory. 20
Hear, then, and neglect me not!
At this time, and on this spot,
The words are uttered from my heart,
As my last earnest prayer ere we depart.

'On good service we are going
Life to risk by sea and land, 25
In which course if Christ our Saviour
Do my sinful soul demand,
Hither come thou back straightway,
Hubert, if alive that day; 30
Return, and sound the Horn, that we
May have a living House still left in thee!'

'Fear not,' quickly answered Hubert;
'As I am thy Father's son,
What thou askest, noble Brother, 35
With God's favour shall be done.'

So were both right well content:
Forth they from the Castle went,
And at the head of their Array
To Palestine the Brothers took their way.

Side by side they fought (the Lucies 41
Were a line for valour famed)
And where'er their strokes alighted,
There the Saracens were tamed.
Whence, then, could it come—the
thought— 45
By what evil spirit brought?
Oh! can a brave Man wish to take
His Brother's life, for Lands' and Castle's
sake?

'Sir!' the Ruffians said to Hubert,
'Deep he lies in Jordan flood.' 50
Stricken by this ill assurance,
Pale and trembling Hubert stood.
'Take your earnings.'—Oh! that I
Could have *seen* my Brother die!
It was a pang that vexed him then; 55
And oft returned, again, and yet again.

Months passed on, and no Sir Eustace!
Nor of him were tidings heard;
Wherefore, bold as day, the Murderer
Back again to England steered. 60
To his Castle Hubert sped;
Nothing has he now to dread.
But silent and by stealth he came,
And at an hour which nobody could name.

None could tell if it were night-time, 65
Night or day, at even or moru;
No one's eye had seen him enter,
No one's ear had heard the Horn.
But bold Hubert lives in glee:
Months and years went smilingly; 70
With plenty was his table spread;
And bright the Lady is who shares his bed.

Likewise he had sons and daughters;
And, as good men do, he sate
At his board by these surrounded, 75
Flourishing in fair estate.
And while thus in open day
Once he sate, as old books say,
A blast was uttered from the Horn,
Where by the Castle-gate it hung forlorn.

'Tis the breath of good Sir Eustace! 81
He is come to claim his right:
Ancient castle, woods, and mountains
Hear the challenge with delight.
Hubert! though the blast be blown 85
He is helpless and alone:
Thou hast a dungeon, speak the word!
And there he may be lodged, and thou
be Lord.

Speak!—astounded Hubert cannot;
And, if power to speak he had, 90
All are daunted, all the household
Smitten to the heart, and sad.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

'Tis Sir Eustace; if it be
Living man, it must be he!
Thus Hubert thought in his dismay, 95
And by a postern-gate he slunk away.

Long, and long was he unheard of:
To his Brother then he came,
Made confession, asked forgiveness,
Asked it by a brother's name, 100
And by all the saints in heaven;
And of Eustace was forgiven:
Then in a convent went to hide
His melancholy head, and there he died.

But Sir Eustace, whom good angels 105
Had preserved from murderers' hands,
And from Pagan chains had rescued,
Lived with honour on his lands.
Sons he had, saw sons of theirs:
And through ages, heirs of heirs, 110
A long posterity renowned,
Sounded the Horn which they alone could
sound.

XV

GOODY BLAKE AND HARRY GILL

A TRUE STORY

[Composed 1798.—Published 1798.]

OH! what's the matter? what's the
matter?

What is't that ails young Harry Gill?
That evermore his teeth they chatter,
Chatter, chatter, chatter still!
Of waistcoats Harry has no lack,
Good duffle grey, and flannel fine; 5
He has a blanket on his back,
And coats enough to smother nine.

In March, December, and in July,
'Tis all the same with Harry Gill; 10
The neighbours tell, and tell you truly,
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
At night, at morning, and at noon,
'Tis all the same with Harry Gill;
Beneath the sun, beneath the moon, 15
His teeth they chatter, chatter still!

Young Harry was a lusty drover,
And who so stout of limb as he?
His cheeks were red as ruddy clover;
His voice was like the voice of three. 20
Old Goody Blake was old and poor;
Ill fed she was, and thinly clad;
And any man who passed her door
Might see how poor a hut she had. 24

All day she spun in her poor dwelling:
And then her three hours' work at night,
Alas! 'twas hardly worth the telling,
It would not pay for candle-light.
Remote from sheltered village-green,
On a hill's northern side she dwelt, 30
Where from sea-blasts the hawthorns
lean,
And hoary dews are slow to melt.

By the same fire to boil their pottage,
Two poor old Dames, as I have known,
Will often live in one small cottage; 35
But she, poor Woman! housed alone.
'Twas well enough, when summer came,
The long, warm, lightsome summer-day,
Then at her door the *canty* Dame
Would sit, as any linnet, gay. 40

But when the ice our streams did fetter,
Oh then how her old bones would shake!
You would have said, if you had met her,
'Twas a hard time for Goody Blake.
Her evenings then were dull and dead:
Sad case it was, as you may think, 46
For very cold to go to bed;
And then for cold not sleep a wink.

O joy for her! whene'er in winter
The winds at night had made a rout; 50
And scattered many a lusty splinter
And many a rotten bough about,
Yet never had she, well or sick,
As every man who knew her says,
A pile beforehand, turf or stick, 55
Enough to warm her for three days.

Now, when the frost was past enduring,
And made her poor old bones to ache,
Could any thing be more alluring
Than an old hedge to Goody Blake? 60
And, now and then, it must be said,
When her old bones were cold and chill,
She left her fire, or left her bed,
To seek the hedge of Harry Gill.

Now Harry he had long suspected 65
This trespass of old Goody Blake;
And vowed that she should be detected—
That he on her would vengeance take.
And oft from his warm fire he'd go,
And to the fields his road would take; 70
And there, at night, in frost and snow,
He watched to seize old Goody Blake.

And once, behind a rick of barley,
Thus looking out did Harry stand:
The moon was full and shining clearly, 75
And crisp with frost the stubble land.
—He hears a noise—he's all awake—
Again?—on tip-toe down the hill
He softly creeps—'tis Goody Blake;
She's at the hedge of Harry Gill! 80

Right glad was he when he beheld her:
Stick after stick did Goody pull:
He stood behind a bush of elder,
Till she had filled her apron full.
When with her load she turned about, 85
The by-way back again to take;
He started forward, with a shout,
And sprang upon poor Goody Blake.

And fiercely by the arm he took her,
And by the arm he held her fast, 90
And fiercely by the arm he shook her,
And cried, 'I've caught you then at last!'

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

Then Goody, who had nothing said,
Her bundle from her lap let fall;
And, kneeling on the sticks, she prayed
To God that is the judge of all. 96

She prayed, her withered hand uprearing,
While Harry held her by the arm—
'God! who art never out of hearing,
O may he never more be warm!' 100
The cold, cold moon above her head,
Thus on her knees did Goody pray;
Young Harry heard what she had said:
And icy cold he turned away.

He went complaining all the morrow 105
That he was cold and very chill:
His face was gloom, his heart was sorrow,
Alas! that day for Harry Gill!
That day he wore a riding-coat,
But not a whit the warmer he: 110
Another was on Thursday brought,
And ere the Sabbath he had three.

'Twas all in vain, a useless matter,
And blankets were about him pinned;
Yet still his jaws and teeth they clatter,
Like a loose casement in the wind. 116
And Harry's flesh it fell away;
And all who see him say, 'tis plain,
That, live as long as live he may,
He never will be warm again. 120

No word to any man he utters,
A-bed or up, to young or old;
But ever to himself he mutters,
'Poor Harry Gill is very cold.' 125
A-bed or up, by night or day;
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
Now think, ye farmers all, I pray,
Of Goody Blake and Harry Gill!

XVI PRELUDE

PREFIXED TO THE VOLUME ENTITLED
'POEMS CHIEFLY OF EARLY AND LATE
YEARS.'

[Composed March, 1842.—Published: vol. of
1842.]

IN desultory walk through orchard
grounds,
Or some deep chestnut grove, oft have
I paused
The while a Thrush, urged rather than
restrained
By gusts of vernal storm, attuned his
song
To his own genial instincts; and was
heard 5
(Though not without some plaintive tones
between)
To utter, above showers of blossom swept
From tossing boughs, the promise of a
calm,

Which the unsheltered traveller might
receive
With thankful spirit. The descant, and
the wind 10
That seemed to play with it in love or
scorn,
Encouraged and endeared the strain of
words
That haply flowed from me, by fits of
silence
Impelled to livelier pace. But now, my
Book!
Charged with those lays, and others of
like mood, 15
Or loftier pitch if higher rose the theme,
Go, single—yet aspiring to be joined
With thy Forerunners that through many
a year
Have faithfully prepared each other's
way—
Go forth upon a mission best fulfilled
When and wherever, in this changeful
world, 21
Power hath been given to please for
higher ends
Than pleasure only; gladdening to pre-
pare
For wholesome sadness, troubling to
refine,
Calming to raise; and, by a sapient Art
Diffused through all the mysteries of our
Being, 26
Softening the toils and pains that have
not ceased
To cast their shadows on our mother Earth
Since the primeval doom. Such is the
grace
Which, though unsued for, fails not to
descend 30
With heavenly inspiration; such the aim
That Reason dictates; and, as even the
wish
Has virtue in it, why should hope to me
Be wanting that sometimes, where fancied
ills
Harass the mind and strip from off the
bowers 35
Of private life their natural pleasantness,
A Voice—devoted to the love whose seeds
Are sown in every human breast, to
beauty
Lodged within compass of the humblest
sight,
To cheerful intercourse with wood and
field, 40
And sympathy with man's substantial
griefs—
Will not be heard in vain? And in those
days
When unforeseen distress spreads far and
wide
Among a People mournfully cast down,
Or into anger roused by venal words 45
In recklessness flung out to overturn

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

The judgment, and divert the general
heart
From mutual good—some strain of thine,
my Book!

Caught at propitious intervals, may win
Listeners who not unwillingly admit 50
Kindly emotion tending to console
And reconcile; and both with young and
old

Exalt the sense of thoughtful gratitude
For benefits that still survive, by faith
In progress, under laws divine, main-
tained. 55

RYDAL MOUNT, March 26, 1842.

XVII TO A CHILD

WRITTEN IN HER ALBUM

[Composed 1834.—Published 1835.]

SMALL service is true service while it
lasts:

Of humblest Friends, bright Creature!
scorn not one:

The Daisy, by the shadow that it casts,
Protects the lingering dew-drop from the
Sun.

XVIII LINES

WRITTEN IN THE ALBUM OF THE
COUNTRESS OF LONSDALE

[Composed November 5, 1834.—Published 1835.]

LADY! a Pen (perhaps with thy regard,
Among the Favoured, favoured not the
least)

Left, 'mid the Records of this Book
inscribed,

Deliberate traces, registers of thought
And feeling, suited to the place and time
That gave them birth:—months passed,
and still this hand, 6

That had not been too timid to imprint
Words which the virtues of thy Lord
inspired,

Was yet not bold enough to write of
Thee.

And why that scrupulous reserve? In
sooth 10

The blameless cause lay in the Theme
itself.

Flowers are there many that delight to
strive

With the sharp wind, and seem to court
the shower,

Yet are by nature careless of the sun
Whether he shine on them or not; and
some, 15

Where'er he moves along the unclouded
sky,

Turn a broad front full on his flattering
beams:

Others do rather from their notice shrink,

Loving the dewy shade,—a humble band,
Modest and sweet, a progeny of earth, 20
Congenial with thy mind and character,
High-born Augusta!

Witness, Towers and Groves!
And Thou, wild Stream, that giv'st the
honoured name

Of Lowther to this ancient Line, bear
witness

From thy most secret haunts; and ye
Parterres, 25

Which She is pleased and proud to call
her own,

Witness how oft upon my noble Friend
Mute offerings, tribute from an inward
sense

Of admiration and respectful love,
Have waited—till the affections could no
more 30

Endure that silence, and broke out in
song,

Snatches of music taken up and dropt
Like those self-solacing, those under,
notes

Trilled by the redbreast, when autumnal
leaves

Are thin upon the bough. Mine, only
mine, 35

The pleasure was, and no one heard the
praise,

Checked, in the moment of its issue,
checked

And reprehended, by a fancied blush
From the pure qualities that called it
forth.

Thus Virtue lives debarred from Vir-
tue's meed; 40

Thus, Lady, is retiredness a veil
That, while it only spreads a softening
charm

O'er features looked at by discerning eyes,
Hides half their beauty from the common
gaze;

And thus, even on the exposed and
breezy hill 45

Of lofty station, female goodness walks,
When side by side with lunar gentleness,
As in a cloister. Yet the grateful Poor

(Such the immunities of low estate,
Plain Nature's enviable privilege, 50

Her sacred recompense for many wants)
Open their hearts before Thee, pouring
out

All that they think and feel, with tears of
joy;

And benedictions not unheard in heaven:
And friend in the ear of friend, where
speech is free 55

To follow truth, is eloquent as they.

Then let the Book receive in these
prompt lines

A just memorial; and thine eyes consent

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

To read that they, who mark thy course,
behold

A life declining with the golden light 60
Of summer, in the season of sere leaves;
See cheerfulness undamped by stealing
Time;

See studied kindness flow with easy
stream,

Illustrated with inborn courtesy;
And an habitual disregard of self 65
Balanced by vigilance for others' weal.

And shall the Verse not tell of lighter
gifts

With these ennobling attributes con-
joined

And blended, in peculiar harmony,
By Youth's surviving spirit? What agile
grace! 70

A nymph-like liberty, in nymph-like
form,

Beheld with wonder; whether floor or
path

Thou tread; or sweep—borne on the
managed steed—

Fleet as the shadows, over down or field,
Driven by strong winds at play among
the clouds. 75

Yet one word more—one farewell
word—a wish

Which came, but it has passed into a
prayer—

That, as thy sun in brightness is de-
clining,

So—at an hour yet distant for *their* sakes
Whose tender love, here faltering on the
way 80

Of a diviner love, will be forgiven—
So may it set in peace, to rise again

For everlasting glory won by faith.

XIX

GRACE DARLING

[Composed 1843.—Published 1845.]

AMONG the dwellers in the silent fields
The natural heart is touched, and public
way

And crowded street resound with ballad
strains,

Inspired by ONE whose very name be-
speaks

Favour divine, exalting human love; 5
Whom, since her birth on bleak North-
umbria's coast,

Known unto few but prized as far as
known,

A single Act endears to high and low
Through the whole land—to Manhood,
moved in spite

Of the world's freezing cares—to generous
Youth— 10

To Infancy, that lisps her praise—to Age

Whose eye reflects it, glistening through
a tear

Of tremulous admiration. Such true fame
Awaits her *now*; but, verily, good deeds
Do no imperishable record find 15

Save in the rolls of heaven, where hers
may live

A theme for angels, when they celebrate
The high-souled virtues which forgetful
earth

Has witnessed. Oh! that winds and
waves could speak

Of things which their united power called
forth 20

From the pure depths of her humanity!
A Maiden gentle, yet, at duty's call,

Firm and unflinching, as the Lighthouse
reared

On the Island-rock, her lonely dwelling-
place;

Or like the invincible Rock itself that
braves, 25

Age after age, the hostile elements,
As when it guarded holy Cuthbert's cell.

All night the storm had raged, nor
ceased, nor paused,

When, as day broke, the Maid, through
misty air,

Espies far off a Wreck, amid the surf, 30
Beating on one of those disastrous isles—
Half of a Vessel, half—no more; the rest

Had vanished, swallowed up with all
that there

Had for the common safety striven in vain,
Or thither thronged for refuge. With
quick glance 35

Daughter and Sire through optic-glass
discern,

Clinging about the remnant of this Ship,
Creatures—how precious in the Maiden's
sight!

For whom, belike, the old Man grieves
still more

Than for their fellow-sufferers engulfed
Where every parting agony is hushed, 41

And hope and fear mix not in further strife.
'But courage, Father! let us out to sea—
A few may yet be saved.' The Daughter's
words,

Her earnest tone, and look beaming with
faith, 45

Dispel the Father's doubts: nor do they
lack

The noble-minded Mother's helping hand
To launch the boat; and with her blessing
cheered,

And inwardly sustained by silent prayer,
Together they put forth, Father and Child!

Each grasps an oar, and struggling on
they go— 51

Rivals in effort; and, alike intent
Here to elude and there surmount, they
watch

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

The billows lengthening, mutually crossed
And shattered, and re-gathering their
might; 55
As if the tumult, by the Almighty's will
Were, in the conscious sea, roused and
prolonged
That woman's fortitude—so tried, so
proved—
May, brighten more and more!

True to the mark,
They stem the current of that perilous
gorge, 60
Their arms still strengthening with the
strengthening heart,
Though danger, as the Wreck is neared,
becomes
More imminent. Not unseen do they
approach;
And rapture, with varieties of fear
Incessantly conflicting, thrills the frames
Of those who, in that dauntless energy,
Foretaste deliverance; but the least
perturbed 67
Can scarcely trust his eyes, when he
perceives
That of the pair—tossed on the waves to
bring
Hope to the hopeless, to the dying, life—
One is a Woman, a poor earthly sister, 71
Or, be the Visitant other than she seems,
A guardian Spirit sent from pitying
Heaven,
In woman's shape. But why prolong the
tale,
Casting weak words amid a host of
thoughts 75
Armed to repel them? Every hazard
faced
And difficulty mastered, with resolve
That no one breathing should be left to
perish,
This last remainder of the crew are all
Placed in the little boat, then o'er the
deep 80
Are safely borne, landed upon the beach,
And, in fulfilment of God's mercy, lodged
Within the sheltering Lighthouse.—
Shout, ye Waves!
Send forth a song of triumph. Waves
and Winds, 85
Exult in this deliverance wrought through
faith
In Him whose Providence your rage hath
served!
Ye screaming Sea-mews, in the concert
join!
And would that some immortal Voice—a
Voice
Fittingly attuned to all that gratitude
Breathes out from floor or couch, through
pallid lips 90
Of the survivors—to the clouds might
bear—

Blended with praise of that parental love,
Beneath whose watchful eye the Maiden
grew
Pious and pure, modest and yet so brave,
Though young so wise, though meek so
resolute— 95
Might carry to the clouds and to the
stars,
Yea, to celestial Choirs, GRACE DARLING'S
name!

XX

THE RUSSIAN FUGITIVE

PART I

[Composed 1830.—Published 1835.]

ENOUGH of rose-bud lips, and eyes
Like harebells bathed in dew,
Of cheek that with carnation vies,
And veins of violet hue;
Earth wants not beauty that may scorn 5
A likening to frail flowers;
Yea, to the stars, if they were born
For seasons and for hours.
Through Moscow's gates, with gold un-
barred,
Stepped One at dead of night, 10
Whom such high beauty could not guard
From meditated blight;
By stealth she passed, and fled as fast
As doth the hunted fawn,
Nor stopped, till in the dappling east 15
Appeared unwelcome dawn.
Seven days she lurked in brake and field,
Seven nights her course renewed,
Sustained by what her scrip might yield,
Or berries of the wood; 20
At length, in darkness travelling on,
When lowly doors were shut,
The haven of her hope she won,
Her Foster-mother's hut.
'To put your love to dangerous proof 25
'I come,' said she, 'from far;
For I have left my Father's roof,
In terror of the Czar.'
No answer did the Matron give,
No second look she cast, 30
But hung upon the Fugitive,
Embracing and embraced.
She led the Lady to a seat
Beside the glimmering fire,
Bathed duteously her wayworn feet, 35
Prevented each desire:—
The cricket chirped, the house-dog dozed,
And on that simple bed,
Where she in childhood had reposed,
Now rests her weary head. 40
When she, whose couch had been the sod,
Whose curtain pine or thorn,
Had breathed a sigh of thanks to God,
Who comforts the forlorn;

THE RUSSIAN FUGITIVE

- While over her the Matron bent
Sleep sealed her eyes, and stole
Feeling from limbs with travel spent,
And trouble from the soul.
- Refreshed, the Wanderer rose at morn,
And soon again was dight
In those unworthy vestments worn
Through long and perilous flight;
And 'O beloved Nurse,' she said,
'My thanks with silent tears
Have unto Heaven and You been paid: 55
Now listen to my fears!'
- 'Have you forgot'—and here she smiled—
'The babbling flatteries
You lavished on me when a child
Disporting round your knees? 50
I was your lambkin, and your bird,
Your star, your gem, your flower;
Light words, that were more lightly heard
In many a cloudless hour!
- 'The blossom you so fondly praised 65
Is come to bitter fruit;
A mighty One upon me gazed;
I spurned his lawless suit,
And must be hidden from his wrath:
You, Foster-father dear,
Will guide me in my forward path;
I may not tarry here!
- 'I cannot bring to utter woe
Your proved fidelity.'—
'Dear child, sweet Mistress, say not so!
For you we both would die.' 76
'Nay, nay, I come with semblance
feigned
And cheek embrowned by art;
Yet, being inwardly unstained,
With courage will depart.'
- 'But whither would you, could you, flee?
A poor Man's counsel take;
The Holy Virgin gives to me
A thought for your dear sake;
Rest, shielded by our Lady's grace,
And soon shall you be led
Forth to a safe abiding-place,
Where never foot doth tread.'
- PART II
- THE dwelling of this faithful pair
In a straggling village stood,
For One who breathed unquiet air
A dangerous neighbourhood;
But wide around lay forest ground
With thickets rough and blind;
And pine-trees made a heavy shade
Impervious to the wind.
- And there, sequestered from the sight,
Was spread a treacherous swamp,
On which the noonday sun shed light
As from a lonely lamp; 100
- 45 And midway in the unsafe morass,
A single Island rose
Of firm dry ground, with healthful grass
Adorned, and shady boughs.
- The Woodman knew, for such the craft
This Russian vassal plied, 106
That never fowler's gun, nor shaft
Of archer, there was tried;
A sanctuary seemed the spot
From all intrusion free; 110
And there he planned an artful Cot
For perfect secrecy.
- With earnest pains unchecked by dread
Of Power's far-stretching hand,
The bold good Man his labour sped 115
At nature's pure command;
Heart-soothed, and busy as a wren,
While, in a hollow nook,
She moulds her sight-eluding den
Above a murmuring brook. 120
- His task accomplished to his mind,
The twain ere break of day
Creep forth, and through the forest wind
Their solitary way;
Few words they speak, nor dare to slack
Their pace from mile to mile, 126
Till they have crossed the quaking marsh,
And reached the lonely Isle.
- The sun above the pine-trees showed
A bright and cheerful face; 130
And Ina looked for her abode,
The promised hiding-place;
She sought in vain, the Woodman smiled;
No threshold could be seen,
Nor roof, nor window;—all seemed wild
As it had ever been. 136
- 80 Advancing, you might guess an hour,
The front with such nice care
Is masked, 'if house it be or bower,'
But in they entered are; 140
As shaggy as were wall and roof
With branches intertwined,
85 So smooth was all within, air-proof,
And delicately lined:
- And hearth was there, and maple dish,
And cups in seemly rows, 146
And couch—all ready to a wish
For nurture or repose;
And Heaven doth to her virtue grant
That there she may abide 150
In solitude, with every want
By cautious love supplied.
- No queen before a shouting crowd
Led on in bridal state, 95
E'er struggled with a heart so proud, 155
Entering her palace gate;
Rejoiced to bid the world farewell,
No saintly anchoress
E'er took possession of her cell
With deeper thankfulness. 160

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

'Father of all, upon thy care
And mercy am I thrown;
Be thou my safeguard!'—such her prayer
When she was left alone,
Kneeling amid the wilderness 165
When joy had passed away,
And smiles, fond efforts of distress
To hide what they betray!

The prayer is heard, the Saints have seen,
Diffused through form and face, 170
Resolves devotedly serene;
That monumental grace
Of Faith, which doth all passions tame
That Reason *should* control;
And shows in the untrembling frame 175
A statue of the soul.

PART III

'Tis sung in ancient minstrelsy
That Phœbus wont to wear
The leaves of any pleasant tree
Around his golden hair; 180
Till Daphne, desperate with pursuit
Of his imperious love,
At her own prayer transformed, took root,
A laurel in the grove.

Then did the Penitent adorn 185
His brow with laurel green;
And 'mid his bright locks never shorn
No meaner leaf was seen;
And poets sage, through every age,
About their temples wound 190
The bay; and conquerors thanked the
Gods,
With laurel chaplets crowned.

Into the mists of fabling Time
So far runs back the praise
Of Beauty, that disdains to climb 195
Along forbidden ways;
That scorns temptation; power defies
Where mutual love is not;
And to the tomb for rescue flies
When life would be a blot. 200

To this fair Votaress a fate
More mild doth Heaven ordain
Upon her Island desolate;
And words, not breathed in vain,
Might tell what intercourse she found, 206
Her silence to endear;
What birds she tamed, what flowers the
ground
Sent forth her peace to cheer.

To one mute Presence, above all,
Her soothed affections clung, 210
A picture on the cabin wall
By Russian usage hung—
The Mother-maid, whose countenance
bright
With love abridged the day;
And, communed with by taper-light, 215
Chased spectral fears away.

And oft, as either Guardian came,
The joy in that retreat
Might any common friendship shame,
So high their hearts would beat; 220
And to the lone Recluse, whate'er
They brought, each visiting
Was like the crowding of the year
With a new burst of spring.

But when she of her Parents thought, 225
The pang was hard to bear;
And, if with all things not enwrought,
That trouble still is near.
Before her flight she had not dared
Their constancy to prove, 230
Too much the heroic Daughter feared
The weakness of their love.

Dark is the past to them, and dark
The future still must be,
Till pitying Saints conduct her bark 235
Into a safer sea—
Or gentle Nature close her eyes,
And set her Spirit free
From the altar of this sacrifice,
In vestal purity. 240

Yet, when above the forest-glooms
The white swans southward passed,
High as the pitch of their swift plumes
Her fancy rode the blast;
And bore her toward the fields of France,
Her Father's native land, 246
To mingle in the rustic dance,
The happiest of the band!

Of those beloved fields she oft
Had heard her Father tell 250
In phrase that now with echoes soft
Haunted her lonely cell;
She saw the hereditary bowers,
She heard the ancestral stream;
The Kremlin and its haughty towers 255
Forgotten like a dream!

PART IV

THE ever-changing Moon had traced
Twelve times her monthly round,
When through the unfrequented Waste
Was heard a startling sound; 260
A shout thrice sent from one who chased
At speed a wounded deer,
Bounding through branches interlaced,
And where the wood was clear.

The fainting creature took the marsh,
And toward the Island fled, 266
While plovers screamed with tumult
harsh
Above his antlered head;
This, Ina saw; and, pale with fear,
Shrunk to her citadel; 270
The desperate deer rushed on, and near
The tangled covert fell.

THE RUSSIAN FUGITIVE

Across the marsh, the game in view,
 The Hunter followed fast,
 Nor paused, till o'er the stag he blew 275
 A death-proclaiming blast;
 Then, resting on her upright mind,
 Came forth the Maid—'In me
 Behold,' she said, 'a stricken Hind
 Pursued by destiny! 280
 'From your deportment, Sir! I deem
 That you have worn a sword,
 And will not hold in light esteem
 A suffering woman's word;
 There is my covert, there perchance 285
 I might have lain concealed,
 My fortunes hid, my countenance
 Not even to you revealed.
 'Tears might be shed, and I might
 pray,
 Crouching and terrified, 290
 That what has been unveiled to-day,
 You would in mystery hide;
 But I will not defile with dust
 The knee that bends to adore
 The God in heaven;—attend, be just; 295
 This ask I, and no more!
 'I speak not of the winter's cold
 For summer's heat exchanged,
 While I have lodged in this rough hold,
 From social life estranged; 300
 Nor yet of trouble and alarms:
 High Heaven is my defence;
 And every season has soft arms
 For injured Innocence.
 'From Moscow to the Wilderness 305
 It was my choice to come,
 Lest virtue should be harbourless,
 And honour want a home;
 And happy were I, if the Czar
 Retain his lawless will, 310
 To end life here like this poor deer,
 Or a lamb on a green hill.'
 'Are you the Maid,' the Stranger cried,
 'From Gallic parents sprung,
 Whose vanishing was rumoured wide,
 Sad theme for every tongue; 316
 Who foiled an Emperor's eager quest?
 You, Lady, forced to wear
 These rude habiliments, and rest
 Your head in this dark lair! 320
 But wonder, pity, soon were quelled;
 And in her face and mien
 The soul's pure brightness he beheld
 Without a veil between:
 He loved, he hoped,—a holy flame 325
 Kindled 'mid rapturous tears;
 The passion of a moment came
 As on the wings of years.
 'Such bounty is no gift of chance,'
 Exclaimed he: 'righteous Heaven, 330
 Preparing your deliverance,
 To me the charge hath given.
 The Czar full oft in words and deeds
 Is stormy and self-willed;
 But, when the Lady Catherine pleads, 335
 His violence is stilled.
 'Leave open to my wish the course,
 And I to her will go;
 From that humane and heavenly source
 Good, only good, can flow.' 340
 Faint sanction given, the Cavalier
 Was eager to depart,
 Though question followed question, dear
 To the Maiden's filial heart.
 Light was his step,—his hopes, more light,
 Kept pace with his desires; 346
 And the fifth morning gave him sight
 Of Moscow's glittering spires.
 He sued:—heart-smitten by the wrong,
 To the lorn Fugitive 350
 The Emperor sent a pledge as strong
 As sovereign power could give.
 O more than mighty change! If e'er
 Amazement rose to pain,
 And joy's excess produced a fear 355
 Of something void and vain;
 'Twas when the Parents, who had
 mourned
 So long the lost as dead,
 Beheld their only Child returned
 The household floor to tread. 360
 Soon gratitude gave way to love
 Within the Maiden's breast;
 Delivered and Deliverer move
 In bridal garments drest;
 Meek Catherine had her own reward; 365
 The Czar bestowed a dower;
 And universal Moscow shared
 The triumph of that hour.
 Flowers strewed the ground; the nuptial
 feast
 Was held with costly state; 370
 And there, 'mid many a noble guest,
 The Foster-parents sate;
 Encouraged by the imperial eye,
 They shrank not into shade;
 Great was their bliss, the honour high
 To them and nature paid! 376

INSCRIPTIONS

I

IN THE GROUNDS OF COLEORTON, THE
SEAT OF SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT,
BART., LEICESTERSHIRE

[Composed 1808.—Published 1815.]

The embowering rose, the acacia, and the
pine,

Will not unwillingly their place resign;
If but the Cedar thrive that near them
stands,

Planted by Beaumont's and by Words-
worth's hands.

One wooed the silent Art with studious
pains:

These groves have heard the Other's
pensive strains;

Devoted thus, their spirits did unite
By interchange of knowledge and delight.

May Nature's kindest powers sustain
the Tree,

And Love protect it from all injury! 10
And when its potent branches, wide out-
thrown,

Darken the brow of this memorial Stone,
Here may some Painter sit in future days,

Some future Poet meditate his lays; 14
Not mindless of that distant age renowned

When Inspiration hovered o'er this
ground,

The haunt of him who sang how spear and
shield

In civil conflict met on Bosworth-field;
And of that famous Youth, full soon
removed

From earth, perhaps by Shakespeare's
self approved, 20

Fletcher's Associate, Jonson's Friend
beloved.

II

IN A GARDEN OF THE SAME

[Composed 1811 (?).—Published 1815.]

OfT is the medal faithful to its trust
When temples, columns, towers, are laid
in dust;

And 'tis a common ordinance of fate
That things obscure and small outlive the
great:

Hence, when yon mansion and the flowery
trim 5

Of this fair garden, and its alleys dim,
And all its stately trees, are passed away,

This little Niche, unconscious of decay,
Perchance may still survive. And be it
known

That it was scooped within the living
stone,— 10

Not by the sluggish and ungrateful pains
Of labourer plodding for his daily gains,

But by an industry that wrought in love;
With help from female hands, that proudly
strove

To aid the work, what time these walks
and bowers 15

Were shaped to cheer dark winter's lonely
hours.

III

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF SIR GEORGE
BEAUMONT, BART., AND IN HIS NAME,
FOR AN URN, PLACED BY HIM AT THE
TERMINATION OF A NEWLY-PLANTED
AVENUE, IN THE SAME GROUNDS

[Composed November, 1811.—Published 1815.]

Ye Lime-trees, ranged before this hal-
lowed Urn,

Shoot forth with lively power at Spring's
return;

And be not slow a stately growth to rear
Of pillars, branching off from year to year,

Till they have learned to frame a dark-
some aisle;— 5

That may recall to mind that awful Pile.
Where Reynolds, 'mid our country's
noblest dead,

In the last sanctity of fame is laid.
—There, though by right the excelling
Painter sleep

Where Death and Glory a joint sabbath
keep, 10

Yet not the less his Spirit would hold dear
Self-hidden praise, and Friendship's
private tear:

Hence, on my patrimonial grounds, have I
Raised this frail tribute to his memory;

From youth a zealous follower of the Art
That he professed; attached to him in
heart; 16

Admiring, loving, and with grief and pride
Feeling what England lost when Reynolds
died.

IV

FOR A SEAT IN THE GROVES OF
COLEORTON

[Composed November 19, 1811.—Published 1815.]

BENEATH yon eastern ridge, the craggy
bound,

Rugged and high, of Charnwood's forest
ground,

Stand yet, but, Stranger! hidden from
thy view,

The ivied Ruins of forlorn GRACE DIEU;
Erst a religious House, which day and night
With hymns resounded, and the chanted
rite: 6

And when those rites had ceased, the Spot
gave birth

To honourable Men of various worth:

INSCRIPTIONS

There, on the margin of a streamlet wild,
Did Francis Beaumont sport, an eager
child; 10

There, under shadow of the neighbouring
rocks,

Sang youthful tales of shepherds and
their flocks;

Unconscious prelude to heroic themes,
Heart-breaking tears, and melancholy
dreams

Of slighted love, and scorn, and jealous
rage, 15

With which his genius shook the buskined
stage.

Communities are lost, and Empires die,
And things of holy use unhallowed lie:

They perish;—but the Intellect can raise,
From airy words alone, a Pile that ne'er
decays. 20

V

WRITTEN WITH A PENCIL UPON A STONE
IN THE WALL OF THE HOUSE (AN OUT-
HOUSE), ON THE ISLAND AT GRASMERE

[Composed 1800.—Published 1800.]

RUDE is this Edifice, and Thou hast seen
Buildings, albeit rude, that have main-
tained

Proportions more harmonious, and ap-
proached

To closer fellowship with ideal grace.
But take it in good part:—alas! the
poor 5

Vitruvius of our village had no help
From the great City; never, upon leaves
Of red Morocco folio saw displayed,
In long succession, pre-existing ghosts

Of Beauties yet unborn—the rustic Lodge
Antique, and Cottage with verandah
graced, 11

Nor lacking, for fit company, alcove,
Green-house, shell-grot, and moss-lined
hermitage.

Thou see'st a homely Pile, yet to these
walls

The heifer comes in the snow-storm, and
here 15

The new-dropped lamb finds shelter from
the wind.

And hither does one Poet sometimes row
His pinnace, a small vagrant barge, up-
plied

With plenteous store of heath and
withered fern,

(A lading which he with his sickle cuts,
Among the mountains) and beneath this
roof 21

He makes his summer couch, and here at
noon

Spreads out his limbs, while, yet unshorn,
the Sheep,

Panting beneath the burthen of their wool,

Lie round him, even as if they were a
part 25

Of his own Household: nor, while from
his bed

He looks, through the open door-place,
toward the lake

And to the stirring breezes, does he want
Creations lovely as the work of sleep—

Fair sights, and visions of romantic joy!

VI

WRITTEN WITH A SLATE PENCIL ON A
STONE, ON THE SIDE OF THE MOUN-
TAIN OF BLACK COMB

[Composed 1813.—Published 1815.]

STAY, bold Adventurer; rest awhile thy
limbs

On this commodious Seat! for much
remains

Of hard ascent before thou reach the top
Of this huge Eminence,—from blackness
named, 5

And, to far-travelled storms of sea and
land,

A favourite spot of tournament and war!
But thee may no such boisterous visit-
ants

Molest; may gentle breezes fan thy brow;
And neither cloud conceal, nor misty
air 9

Bedim, the grand terraqueous spectacle,
From centre to circumference, unveiled!

Know, if thou grudge not to prolong thy
rest,

That on the summit whither thou art
bound,

A geographic Labourer pitched his tent,
With books supplied and instruments of
art, 15

To measure height and distance; lonely
task,

Week after week pursued!—To him was
given

Full many a glimpse (but sparingly be-
stowed

On timid man) of Nature's processes
Upon the exalted hills. He made re-
port 20

That once, while there he plied his
studious work

Within that canvass Dwelling, colours,
lines,

And the whole surface of the out-spread
map,

Became invisible: for all around
Had darkness fallen—unthreatened, un-
proclaimed— 25

As if the golden day itself had been
Extinguished in a moment; total gloom,

In which he sate alone, with unclosed
eyes,

Upon the blinded mountain's silent top!

INSCRIPTIONS

VII

WRITTEN WITH A SLATE PENCIL UPON
A STONE, THE LARGEST OF A HEAP
LYING NEAR A DESERTED QUARRY,
UPON ONE OF THE ISLANDS AT RYDAL

[Composed 1800.—Published 1800.]

STRANGER! this hillock of mis-shapen
stones

Is not a Ruin spared or made by time,
Nor, as perchance thou rashly deem'st,
the Cairn

Of some old British Chief: 'tis nothing
more

Than the rude embryo of a little Dome
Or Pleasure-house, once destined to be
built

Among the birch-trees of this rocky isle.
But, as it chanced, Sir William having
learned

That from the shore a full-grown man
might wade,

And make himself a freeman of this spot
At any hour he chose, the prudent Knight
Desisted, and the quarry and the mound
Are monuments of his unfinished task.

The block on which these lines are traced,
perhaps,

Was once selected as the corner-stone
Of that intended Pile, which would have
been

Some quaint odd plaything of elaborate
skill,

So that, I guess, the linnet and the
thrush,

And other little builders who dwell here,
Had wondered at the work. But blame
him not,

For old Sir William was a gentle Knight,
Bred in this vale, to which he appertained
With all his ancestry. Then peace to him,
And for the outrage which he had devised
Entire forgiveness!—But if thou art one
On fire with thy impatience to become
An inmate of these mountains,—if, dis-
turbed

By beautiful conceptions, thou hast hewn
Out of the quiet rock the elements

Of thy trim Mansion destined soon to
blaze

In snow-white splendour,—think again;
and, taught

By old Sir William and his quarry, leave
Thy fragments to the bramble and the
rose;

There let the vernal slow-worm sun him-
self,

And let the redbreast hop from stone to
stone.

VIII

[Composed 1830 (? 1831).—Published 1835.]

IN these fair vales hath many a Tree
At Wordsworth's suit been spared;

And from the builder's hand this Stone,

For some rude beauty of its own,

Was rescued by the Bard:

So let it rest; and time will come

When here the tender-hearted

May heave a gentle sigh for him,

As one of the departed.

IX

[Composed 1826.—Published 1835.]

THE massy Ways, carried across these
heights

By Roman perseverance, are destroyed,
Or hidden under ground, like sleeping
worms.

How venture then to hope that Time will
spare

This humble Walk? Yet on the moun-
tain's side

A POET's hand first shaped it; and the
steps

Of that same Bard—repeated to and fro
At morn, at noon, and under moonlight
skies

Through the vicissitudes of many a year—
Forbade the weeds to creep o'er its grey
line.

No longer, scattering to the heedless winds
The vocal raptures of fresh poesy,

Shall he frequent these precincts; locked
no more

In earnest converse with beloved Friends,
Here will he gather stores of ready bliss,

As from the beds and borders of a garden
Choice flowers are gathered! But, if

Power may spring
Out of a farewell yearning—favoured
more

Than kindred wishes mated suitably
With vain regrets—the Exile would con-
sign

This Walk, his loved possession, to the
care

Of those pure Minds that reverence the
Muse.

X

INSCRIPTIONS SUPPOSED TO BE FOUND
IN AND NEAR A HERMIT'S CELL

[This group (x-xiv) was composed 1818.—
Published 1820.]

I

HOPES what are they?—Beads of morning
Strung on slender blades of grass;

Or a spider's web adorning
In a strait and treacherous pass,

What are fears but voices airy?
Whispering harm where harm is not;

And deluding the unwary
Till the fatal bolt is shot!

INSCRIPTIONS

What is glory?—in the socket
See how dying tapers fare!
What is pride?—a whizzing rocket
That would emulate a star.

What is friendship?—do not trust her,
Nor the vows which she has made;
Diamonds dart their brightest lustre 15
From a palsy-shaken head.

What is truth?—a staff rejected;
Duty?—an unwelcome clog;
Joy?—a moon by fits reflected
In a swamp or watery bog;

Bright, as if through ether steering,
To the Traveller's eye it shone:
He hath hailed it re-appearing—
And as quickly it is gone;

Such is Joy—as quickly hidden,
Or mis-shapen to the sight,
And by sullen weeds forbidden
To resume its native light.

What is youth?—a dancing billow,
(Winds behind, and rocks before!)
Age?—a drooping, tottering willow
On a flat and lazy shore.

What is peace?—when pain is over,
And love ceases to rebel,
Let the last faint sigh discover
That precedes the passing-knell!

XI

INSCRIBED UPON A ROCK

II

PAUSE, Traveller! whosoe'er thou be
Whom chance may lead to this retreat,
Where silence yields reluctantly
Even to the fleecy straggler's bleat;

Give voice to what my hand shall trace, 5
And fear not lest an idle sound
Of words unsuited to the place
Disturb its solitude profound.

I saw this Rock, while vernal air
Blew softly o'er the russet heath,
Uphold a Monument as fair 10
As church or abbey furnisheth.

Unsullied did it meet the day,
Like marble, white, like ether, pure;
As if, beneath, some hero lay,
Honoured with costliest sepulture.

My fancy kindled as I gazed;
And, ever as the sun shone forth,
The flattered structure glistened, blazed,
And seemed the proudest thing on earth.

But frost had reared the gorgeous Pile 21
Unsound as those which Fortune builds—
To undermine with secret guile,
Sapped by the very beam that gilds.

And, while I gazed, with sudden shock
10 Fell the whole Fabric to the ground; 26
And naked left this dripping Rock,
With shapeless ruin spread around!

XII

III

HAST thou seen, with flash incessant,
Bubbles gliding under ice,
Bodied forth and evanescent,
No one knows by what device?

20 Such are thoughts!—A wind-swept
meadow 5

Mimicking a troubled sea,
Such is life; and death a shadow
From the rock eternity!

XIII

NEAR THE SPRING OF THE HERMITAGE

IV

TROUBLED long with warring notions
Long impatient of Thy rod,
30 I resign my soul's emotions
Unto Thee, mysterious God!

What avails the kindly shelter

Yielded by this craggy rent, 5

If my spirit toss and welter

35 On the waves of discontent?

Pasching Summer hath no warrant
To consume this crystal Well; 10
Rains, that make each rill a torrent,
Neither sully it nor swell.

Thus, dishonouring not her station,
Would my Life present to Thee,
Gracious God, the pure oblation 15
Of divine tranquillity!

XIV

V

NOT seldom, clad in radiant vest,
Deceitfully goes forth the Morn;
Not seldom Evening in the west
Sinks smilingly forsworn.

The smoothest seas will sometimes prove,
10 To the confiding Bark, untrue; 6
And, if she trust the stars above
They can be treacherous too.

The umbrageous Oak, in pomp outspread,
Full oft, when storms the welkin rend,
15 Draws lightning down upon the head 11
It promised to defend.

But Thou art true, incarnate Lord,
Who didst vouchsafe for man to die;
Thy smile is sure, Thy plighted word 15
No change can falsify!

I bent before Thy gracious throne,
And asked for peace on suppliant knee;
And peace was given,—nor peace alone,
But faith sublimed to ecstasy! 20

INSCRIPTIONS

XV

FOR THE SPOT WHERE THE HERMITAGE
STOOD ON ST. HERBERT'S ISLAND,
DERWENT-WATER

[Composed 1800.—Published 1800.]

If thou in the dear love of some one
Friend
Hast been so happy that thou know'st
what thoughts
Will sometimes in the happiness of love
Make the heart sink, then wilt thou
reverence
This quiet spot; and, Stranger! not un-
moved 5
Wilt thou behold this shapeless heap of
stones,
The desolate ruins of St. Herbert's Cell.
Here stood his threshold; here was spread
the roof
That sheltered him, a self-secluded Man,
After long exercise in social cares 10
And offices humane, intent to adore
The Deity, with undistracted mind,
And meditate on everlasting things,
In utter solitude.—But he had left
A Fellow-labourer, whom the good Man
loved 15
As his own soul. And, when with eye
upraised
To heaven he knelt before the crucifix,

While o'er the lake the cataract of
Lodore
Pealed to his orisons, and when he paced
Along the beach of this small isle and
thought 20
Of his Companion, he would pray that
both
(Now that their earthly duties were
fulfilled)
Might die in the same moment. Nor in
vain
So prayed he:—as our chronicles report,
Though here the Hermit numbered his
last day 25
Far from St. Cuthbert his beloved Friend,
Those holy Men both died in the same
hour.

XVI

ON THE BANKS OF A ROCKY STREAM
[Composed (?).—Published 1850.]

BEHOLD an emblem of our human mind
Crowded with thoughts that need a settled
home,
Yet, like to eddying balls of foam
Within this whirlpool, they each other
chase
Round and round, and neither find 5
An outlet nor a resting-place!
Stranger, if such disquietude be thine,
Fall on thy knees and sue for help divine.

SELECTIONS FROM CHAUCER MODERNISED

THE PRIORESS' TALE

'Call up him who left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold.'

In the following Poem no further deviation from the original has been made than was necessary for the fluent reading and instant understanding of the Author: so much, however, is the language altered since Chaucer's time, especially in pronunciation, that much was to be removed, and its place supplied with as little incongruity as possible. The ancient accent has been retained in a few conjunctions, as *also* and *alway*, from a conviction that such sprinklings of antiquity would be admitted, by persons of taste, to have a graceful accordance with the subject. The fierce bigotry of the Prioress forms a fine background for her tender-hearted sympathies with the Mother and Child; and the mode in which the story is told amply atones for the extravagance of the miracle.

[Written 1801.—Published 1820.]

I
'O LORD, our Lord! how wondrously,'
(quoth she)
'Thy name in this large world is spread
abroad!
For not alone by men of dignity
Thy worship is performed and precious
laud;
But by the mouths of children, gracious
God! 5

Thy goodness is set forth; they when they
lie
Upon the breast Thy name do glorify.

II
'Wherefore in praise, the worthiest that
I may,
Jesu! of Thee, and the white Lily-flower
Which did Thee bear, and is a Maid for 10
aye,

THE PRIORRESS' TALE

To tell a story I will use my power;
Not that I may increase her honour's
dower,
For she herself is honour, and the root
Of goodness, next her Son, our soul's best
boot.

III

'O Mother Maid! O Maid and Mother
free!
O bush unburnt! burning in Moses'
sight!

That down didst ravish from the Deity,
Through humbleness, the Spirit that did
alight

Upon thy heart, whence, through that
glory's might,
Conceived was the Father's sapience, 20
Help me to tell it in thy reverence!

IV

'Lady! thy goodness, thy magnificence,
Thy virtue, and thy great humility.
Surpass all science and all utterance;
For sometimes, Lady! ere men pray to
thee 25

Thou goest before in thy benignity,
The light to us vouchsafing of thy prayer,
To be our guide unto thy Son so dear.

V

'My knowledge is so weak, O blissful
Queen!
To tell abroad thy mighty worthiness, 30
That I the weight of it may not sustain;
But as a child of twelvemonths old or less,
That laboureth his language to express,
Even so fare I; and therefore, I thee pray,
Guide thou my song which I of thee shall
say. 35

VI

'There was in Asia, in a mighty town,
'Mong Christian folk, a street where Jews
might be,
Assigned to them and given them for
their own
By a great Lord, for gain and usury,
Hateful to Christ and to His company;
And through this street who list might
ride and wend; 41
Free was it, and unbarred at either end.

VII

'A little school of Christian people stood
Down at the farther end, in which there
were
A nest of children come of Christian
blood, 45
That learned in that school from year to
year
Such sort of doctrine as men used there,
That is to say, to sing and read also,
As little children in their childhood do.

VIII

'Among these children was a Widow's
son, 50
A little scholar,¹ scarcely seven years old,
Who day by day unto this school hath
gone,
And eke, when he the image did behold
Of Jesu's Mother, as he had been told,
This Child was wont to kneel adown and
say 55
Ave Marie, as he goeth by the way.

IX

'This Widow thus her little Son hath
taught
Our blissful Lady, Jesu's Mother dear,
To worship aye, and he forgot it not; 60
For simple² infant hath a ready ear. 60
Sweet is the holiness of youth: and hence,
Calling to mind this matter when I may,
Saint Nicholas in my presence standeth
aye,
For he so young to Christ did reverence.

X

'This little Child, while in the school he
sate 65
His Primer conning with an earnest
cheer,
The whilst the rest their anthem-book
repeat
The *Alma Redemptoris* did he hear;
And as he durst he drew him near and
near,
And hearkened to the words and to the
note, 70
Till the first verse he learned it all by rote.

XI

'This Latin knew he nothing what it
said,
For he too tender was of age to know;
But to his comrade he repaired, and
prayed
That he the meaning of this song would
show, 75
And unto him declare why men sing so;
This oftentimes, that he might be at ease,
This child did him beseech on his bare
knees.

XII

'His Schoolfellow, who elder was than he,
Answered him thus:—"This song, I have
heard say, 80
Was fashioned for our blissful Lady free;
Her to salute, and also her to pray
To be our help upon our dying day;
If there is more in this, I know it not;
Song do I learn,—small grammar I have
got." 85

¹ *Clergeon* (Chaucer); i.e. chorister.—Ed.
² *Sely* (Chaucer); i.e. happy. Line 61 was interpolated by Wordsworth.—Ed.

CHAUCEER MODERNISED

XIII

"And is this song fashioned in reverence
Of Jesu's Mother?" said this Innocent;
"Now, certes, I will use my diligence
To con it all ere Christmas-tide be spent;
Although I for my Primer shall be shent,
And shall be beaten three times in an
hour,
Our Lady I will praise with all my power."

XIV

'His Schoolfellow, whom he had so be-
sought,
As they went homeward taught him
privily
And then he sang it well and fearlessly,
From word to word according to the
note:
Twice in a day it passed through his
throat;
Homeward and schoolward whensoever he
went,
On Jesu's Mother fixed was his intent.

XV

'Through all the Jewry (this before
said I)
This little Child, as he came to and fro,
Full merrily then would he sing and cry,
O *Alma Redemptoris*! high and low:
The sweetness of Christ's Mother pierced
so
His heart, that her to praise, to her to
pray,
He cannot stop his singing by the way.

XVI

'The Serpent, Satan, our first foe, that
hath
His wasp's nest in Jew's heart, upswelled
—"O woe,
O Hebrew people!" said he in his wrath,
"Is it an honest thing? Shall this be so?
That such a Boy where'er he lists shall go
In your despite, and sing his hymns and
saws,
Which is against the reverence of our
laws!"

XVII

'From that day forward have the Jews
conspired
Out of the world this Innocent to chase;
And to this end a Homicide they hired,
That in an alley had a privy place,
And, as the Child 'gan to the school to
-pace,
This cruel Jew him seized, and held him
fast
And cut his throat, and in a pit him
cast.

XVIII

'I say that him into a pit they threw,
A loathsome pit, whence noisome scents
exhale;
O cursèd folk! away, ye Herods new!
What may your ill intentions you avail?
Murder will out; certes it will not fail;
Know, that the honour of high God may
spread,
The blood cries out on your accursèd deed.

XIX

'O Martyr 'stablished in virginity!
Now may'st thou sing for aye before the
throne,
Following the Lamb celestial,' quoth
she,
'Of which the great Evangelist, Saint
John,
In Patmos wrote, who saith of them that
go
Before the Lamb singing continually,
That never fleshly woman they did know.

XX

'Now this poor Widow waiteth all that
night
After her little Child, and he came not;
For which, by earliest glimpse of morning
light,
With face all pale with dread and busy
thought,
She at the School and elsewhere him hath
sought,
Until thus far she learned, that he had
been
In the Jews' street, and there he last was
seen.

XXI

'With Mother's pity in her breast en-
closed
She goeth, as she were half out of her
mind,
To every place wherein she hath supposed
By likelihood her little Son to find;
And ever on Christ's Mother meek and
kind
She cried, till to the Jewry she was
brought,
And him among the accursèd Jews she
sought.

XXII

'She asketh, and she piteously doth pray
To every Jew that dwelleth in that place
To tell her if her child had passed that
way;
They all said—Nay; but Jesu of His grace
Gave to her thought, that in a little space
She for her Son in that same spot did cry
Where he was cast into a pit hard by.

THE PRIORESS' TALE

XXIII

'O Thou great God that dost perform
Thy laud
By mouths of Innocents, lo! here Thy
might;
This gem of chastity, this emerald,
And eke of martyrdom this ruby bright,
There, where with mangled throat he lay
upright, 160
The *Alma Redemptoris* 'gan to sing
So loud, that with his voice the place did
ring.

XXIV

'The Christian folk that through the
Jewry went
Come to the spot in wonder at the thing;
And hastily they for the Provost sent;
Immediately he came, not tarrying, 166
And praiseth Christ that is our heavenly
King,
And eke His Mother, honour of Mankind:
Which done, he bade that they the Jews
should bind.

XXV

'This Child with piteous lamentation
then 170
Was taken up, singing his song alway;
And with procession great and pomp of
men
To the next Abbey him they bare away;
His Mother swooning by the body lay:
And scarcely could the people that were
near 175
Remove this second Rachel from the
bier.

XXVI

'Torment and shameful death to every
one
This Provost doth for those bad Jews
prepare
That of this murder wist, and that anon:
Such wickedness his judgments cannot
spare; 180
Who will do evil, evil shall he bear;
Them therefore with wild horses did he
draw,
And after that he hung them by the law.

XXVII

'Upon his bier this Innocent doth lie
Before the altar while the Mass doth
last: 185
The Abbot with his convent's company
Then sped themselves to bury him full
fast;
And, when they holy water on him cast,
Yet spake this Child when sprinkled was
the water; 189
And sang, *O Alma Redemptoris Mater!*

XXVIII

'This Abbot, for he was a holy man,
As all Monks are, or surely ought to be,
In supplication to the Child began
Thus saying, "O dear Child! I summon
thee
In virtue of the holy Trinity 195
Tell me the cause why thou dost sing this
hymn,
Since that thy throat is cut, as it doth
seem."

XXIX

"My throat is cut unto the bone, I
trow,"
Said this young Child, "and by the law of
kind
I should have died, yea many hours ago;
But Jesus Christ, as in the books ye
find, 201
Will that His glory last, and be in mind;
And, for the worship of His Mother dear,
Yet may I sing, *O Alma!* loud and clear.

XXX

"This well of mercy, Jesu's Mother
sweet, 205
After my knowledge I have loved alway;
And in the hour when I my death did
meet
To me she came, and thus to me did
say,
'Thou in thy dying sing this holy lay,'
As ye have heard; and soon as I had
sung 210
Methought she laid a grain upon my
tongue.

XXXI

"Wherefore I sing, nor can from song
refrain,
In honour of that blissful Maiden free,
Till from my tongue off-taken is the grain;
And after that thus said she unto me; 215
'My little Child, then will I come for
thee
Soon as the grain from off thy tongue they
take:
Be not dismayed, I will not thee forsake!'"

XXXII

'This holy Monk, this Abbot—him
mean I,
Touched then his tongue, and took away
the grain; 220
And he gave up the ghost full peacefully;
And, when the Abbot had this wonder
seen,
His salt tears trickled down like showers
of rain;
And on his face he dropped upon the
ground,
And still he lay as if he had been bound.

CHAUCER MODERNISED

XXXIII

'Eke the whole Convent on the pavement lay,
Weeping and praising Jesu's Mother dear;
And after that they rose, and took their way,
And lifted up this Martyr from the bier,
And in a tomb of precious marble clear
Enclosed his uncorrupted body sweet.¹—
Where'er he be, God grant us him to meet!

XXXIV

'Young Hew of Lincoln! in like sort laid low
By curs'd Jews—thing well and widely known,
For it was done a little while ago—
Pray also thou for us, while here we tarry
Weak sinful folk, that God, with pitying eye,
In mercy would His mercy multiply
On us, for reverence of His Mother Mary!'

II

THE CUCKOO AND THE NIGHTINGALE

[Written 1801.—Published 1841 (R. H. Horne's *The Poems of Geoffrey Chaucer, Modernised*); vol. of 1842.]

I

THE God of Love—*ah, benedicite!*
How mighty and how great a Lord is he!
For he of low hearts can make high, of high
He can make low, and unto death bring high;
And hard hearts he can make them kind
and free.

II

Within a little time, as hath been found,
He can make sick folk whole and fresh
and sound;
Them who are whole in body and in mind,
He can make sick,—bind can he and unbind
All that he will have bound, or have unbound.

III

To tell his might my wit may not suffice;
Foolish men he can make them out of wise;
For he may do all that he will devise;
Loose livers he can make abate their vice,
And proud hearts can make tremble in a trice.

¹ Enclosed they his little body sweet (Chaucer).—Ed.

IV

In brief, the whole of what he will, he may;
Against him dare not any wight say nay;
To humble or afflict whome'er he will,
To gladden or to grieve, he hath like skill;
But most his might he sheds on the eve of May.

V

For every true heart, gentle heart and free,
That with him is, or thinketh so to be,
Now against May shall have some stirring—whether
To joy, or be it to some mourning; never
At other time, methinks, in like degree.

VI

For now when they may hear the small birds' song,
And see the budding leaves the branches throng,
This unto their remembrance doth bring
All kinds of pleasure mix'd with sorrowing;
And longing of sweet thoughts that ever long.

VII

And of that longing heaviness doth come,
Whence oft great sickness grows of heart and home;
Sick are they all for lack of their desire;
And thus in May their hearts are set on fire,
So that they burn forth in great martyrdom.

VIII

In sooth, I speak from feeling, what though now
Old am I, and to genial pleasure slow;
Yet have I felt of sickness through the May,
Both hot and cold, and heart-aches every day,—
How hard, alas! to bear, I only know.

IX

Such shaking doth the fever in me keep
Through all this May that I have little sleep;
And also 'tis not likely unto me,
That any living heart should sleepy be
In which Love's dart its fiery point doth steep.

X

But tossing lately on a sleepless bed,
I of a token thought which Lovers heed;
How among them it was a common tale,
That it was good to hear the Nightingale,
Ere the vile Cuckoo's note be uttered.

THE CUCKOO AND THE NIGHTINGALE

XI

And then I thought anon as it was day,
I gladly would go somewhere to essay
If I perchance, a Nightingale might hear,
For yet had I heard none, of all that year,
And it was then the third night of the
May. 55

XII

And soon as I a glimpse of day espied,
No longer would I in my bed abide,
But straight way to a wood that was hard
by,
Forth did I go, alone and fearlessly,
And held the pathway down by a brook-
side; 60

XIII

Till to a lawn I came all white and green,
I in so fair a one had never been.
The ground was green, with daisy
powdered over;
Tall were the flowers, the grove a lofty
cover,¹
All green and white; and nothing else was
seen. 65

XIV

There sate I down among the fair fresh
flowers,
And saw the birds come tripping from
their bowers,
Where they had rested them all night;
and they,
Who were so joyful at the light of day,
Began to honour May with all their
powers. 70

XV

Well did they know that service all by
rote,
And there was many and many a lovely
note,
Some, singing loud, as if they had com-
plained;
Some with their notes another manner
feigned;
And some did sing all out with the full
throat. 75

XVI

They pruned themselves, and made them-
selves right gay,
Dancing and leaping light upon the spray;
And ever two and two together were,
The same as they had chosen for the year,
Upon Saint Valentine's returning day. 80

XVII

Meanwhile the stream, whose bank I sate
upon,
Was making such a noise as it ran on
Accordant to the sweet Birds' harmony;
Methought that it was the best melody
Which ever to man's ear a passage won.

¹ The flowers and the grass alike all high (Chaucer);
i.e. grass and daisies being of equal height.—Ed.

XVIII

And for delight, but how I never wot, 86
I in a slumber and a swoon was caught,
Not all asleep and yet not waking wholly;
And as I lay, the Cuckoo, bird unholy,
Broke silence, or I heard him in my
thought. 90

XIX

And that was right upon a tree fast by,
And who was then ill satisfied but I?
Now, God, quoth I, that died upon the
rood,
From thee and thy base throat, keep all
that's good,
Full little joy have I now of thy cry. 95

XX

And, as I with the Cuckoo thus 'gan chide,
In the next bush that was me fast beside,
I heard the lusty Nightingale so sing,
That her clear voice made a loud rioting,
Echoing thorough all the green wood
wide. 100

XXI

Ah! good sweet Nightingale! for my
heart's cheer,
Hence hast thou stayed a little while too
long;
For we have had the sorry Cuckoo here,
And she hath been before thee with her
song;
Evil light on her! she hath done me
wrong. 105

XXII

But hear you now a wondrous thing, I
pray;
As long as in that swooning-fit I lay,
Methought I wist right well what these
birds meant,
And had good knowing both of their
intent,
And of their speech, and all that they
would say. 110

XXIII

The Nightingale thus in my hearing
spake:—
Good Cuckoo, seek some other bush or
brake,
And, prithee, let us that can sing dwell
here;
For every wight eschews thy song to hear,
Such uncouth singing verily dost thou
make. 115

XXIV

What! quoth she then, what is't that ails
thee now?
It seems to me I sing as well as thou;
For mine's a song that is both true and
plain,—
Although I cannot quaver so in vain
As thou dost in thy throat, I wot not
how. 120

XXV

All men may understanding have of me,
But, Nightingale, so may they not of thee;
For thou hast many a foolish and quaint
cry:—

Thou say'st OSEE, OSEE, then how may I
Have knowledge, I thee pray, what this
may be? 125

XXVI

Ah, fool! quoth she, wist thou not what
it is?

Of as I say OSEE, OSEE, I wis,
Then mean I, that I should be wonderous
fain

That shamefully they one and all were
slain, 129

Whoever against Love mean aught amiss.

XXVII

And also would I that they all were dead,
Who do not think in love their life to lead;
For who is loth the God of Love to obey,
Is only fit to die, I dare well say,
And for that cause OSEE I cry; take
heed! 135

XXVIII

Ay, quoth the Cuckoo, that is a quaint
law,
That all must love or die; but I withdraw,
And take my leave of all such company,
For mine intent it neither is to die,
Nor ever while I live Love's yoke to
draw. 140

XXIX

For lovers, of all folk that be alive,
The most disquiet have and least do
thrive;
Most feeling have of sorrow, woe and care,
And the least welfare cometh to their
share;
What need is there against the truth to
strive? 145

XXX

What! quoth she, thou art all out of thy
mind,
That in thy churlishness a cause canst
find
To speak of Love's true Servants in this
mood;
For in this world no service is so good
To every wight that gentle is of kind. 150

XXXI

For thereof comes all goodness and all
worth;
All gentleness and honour thence come
forth;
Thence worship comes, content and true
heart's pleasure,
And full-assured trust, joy without
measure, 154
And jollity, fresh cheerfulness, and mirth;

XXXII

And bounty, lowliness, and courtesy,
And seemliness, and faithful company,
And dread of shame that will not do amiss;
For he that faithfully Love's servant is,
Rather than be disgraced, would chuse
to die. 160

XXXIII

And that the very truth it is which I
Now say—in such belief I'll live and die;
And Cuckoo, do thou so, by my advice.
Then, quoth she, let me never hope for
bliss,
If with that counsel I do e'er comply. 165

XXXIV

Good Nightingale! thou speakest won-
drous fair,
Yet for all that, the truth is found else-
where;
For Love in young folk is but rage, I
wis;
And Love in old folk a great dotage is;
Who most it useth, him 'twill most
impair. 170

XXXV

For thereof come all contraries to glad-
ness;
Thence sickness comes, and overwhelm-
ing sadness,
Mistrust and jealousy, despite, debate,
Dishonour, shame, envy importunate,
Pride, anger, mischief, poverty, and mad-
ness. 175

XXXVI

Loving is aye an office of despair,
And one thing is therein which is not
fair;
For whoso gets of love a little bliss,
Unless it alway stay with him, I wis
He may full soon go with an old man's
hair. 180

XXXVII

And, therefore, Nightingale! do thou
keep nigh,
For trust me well, in spite of thy quaint
cry,
If long time from thy mate thou be, or
far,
Thou'lt be as others that forsaken are;
Then shalt thou raise a clamour as do I.

XXXVIII

Fie, quoth she, on thy name, Bird ill
beseen! 186
The God of Love afflict thee with all
teen,
For thou art worse than mad a thousand
fold;
For many a one hath virtues manifold,
Who had been nought, if Love had never
been. 190

THE CUCKOO AND THE NIGHTINGALE

XXXIX

For evermore his servants Love amendeth,
And he from every blemish them defendeth;
And maketh them to burn, as in a fire,
In loyalty, and worshipful desire,
And, when it likes him, joy enough them sendeth. 195

XL

Thou Nightingale! the Cuckoo said, be still,
For Love no reason hath but his own will;—
For to th' untrue he oft gives ease and joy;
True lovers doth so bitterly annoy,
He lets them perish through that grievous ill. 200

XLI

With such a master would I never be;¹
For he, in sooth, is blind, and may not see,
And knows not when he hurts and when he heals;
Within this court full seldom Truth avails,
So diverse in his wilfulness is he. 205

XLII

Then of the Nightingale did I take note,
How from her inmost heart a sigh she brought,
And said, Alas! that ever I was born,
Not one word have I now, I am so forlorn,—
And with that word, she into tears burst out. 210

XLIII

Alas, alas! my very heart will break,
Quoth she, to hear this churlish bird thus speak
Of Love, and of his holy services;
Now, God of Love! thou help me in some wise,
That vengeance on this Cuckoo I may wreak. 215

XLIV

And so methought I started up anon,
And to the brook I ran and got a stone,
Which at the Cuckoo hardly I cast,
And he for dread did fly away full fast;
And glad, in sooth, was I when he was gone. 220

XLV

And as he flew, the Cuckoo, ever and aye,
Kept crying, 'Farewell!—farewell, Pop-injay!¹
As if in scornful mockery of me;
And on I hunted him from tree to tree,
Till he was far, all out of sight, away.

¹ From a manuscript in the Bodleian, as are also stanzas 44 and 45, which are necessary to complete the sense.

XLVI

Then straightway came the Nightingale to me, 226
And said, Forsooth, my friend, do I thank thee,
That thou wert near to rescue me; and now,
Unto the God of Love I make a vow,
That all this May I will thy songstress be. 230

XLVII

Well satisfied, I thanked her, and she said,
By this mishap no longer be dismayed,
Though thou the Cuckoo heard, ere thou heard'st me;
Yet if I live it shall amended be,
When next May comes, if I am not afraid. 235

XLVIII

And one thing will I counsel thee also,
The Cuckoo trust not thou, nor his Love's saw;
All that she said is an outrageous lie.
Nay, nothing shall me bring thereto, quoth I,
For Love, and it hath done me mighty woe. 240

XLIX

Yea, hath it? use, quoth she, this medicine;
This May-time, every day beforethou dine,
Go look on the fresh daisy; then say I,
Although for pain thou may'st be like to die,
Thou wilt be eased, and less wilt droop and pine. 245

L

And mind always that thou be good and true,
And I will sing one song, of many new,
For love of thee, as loud as I may cry;
And then did she begin this song full high,
'Beshrew all them that are in love untrue.' 250

LI

And soon as she had sung it to the end,
Now farewell, quoth she, for I hence must wend;
And, God of Love, that can right well and may,
Send unto thee as mickle joy this day,
As ever he to Lover yet did send. 255

LII

Thus takes the Nightingale her leave of me;
I pray to God with her always to be,
And joy of love to send her evermore;
And shield us from the Cuckoo and her lore,
For there is not so false a bird as she. 260

CHAMBER MODERNISED

LIII

Forth then she flew, the gentle Nightingale;
To all the Birds that lodged within that dale,
And gathered each and all into one place;
And them besought to hear her doleful case,
And thus it was that she began her tale.

LIV

The Cuckoo—'tis not well that I should hide
How she and I did each the other chide,
And without ceasing, since it was daylight;
And now I pray you all to do me right
Of that false Bird whom Love can not abide.

LV

Then spake one Bird, and full assent all gave;
This matter asketh counsel good as grave,
For birds we are—all here together brought;
And, in good sooth, the Cuckoo here is not;
And therefore we a Parliament will have.

LVI

And thereat shall the Eagle be our Lord,
And other Peers whose names are on record;
A summons to the Cuckoo shall be sent,
And judgment there be given; or that intent
Failing, we finally shall make accord.

LVII

And all this shall be done, without a nay,
The morrow after Saint Valentine's day,
Under a maple that is well beseen,
Before the chamber-window of the Queen,
At Woodstock, on the meadow green and gay.

LVIII

She thanked them; and then her leave she took,
And flew into a hawthorn by that brook;
And there she sate and sung—upon that tree—
'For term of life Love shall have hold of me'—
So loudly, that I with that song awoke.
Unlearned Book and rude, as well I know,
For beauty thou hast none, nor eloquence,
Who did on thee the hardness bestow
To appear before my Lady? but a sense
Thou surely hast of her benevolence,

Whereof her hourly bearing proof doth give;
For of all good she is the best alive.

Alas, poor Book! for thy unworthiness,
To show to her some pleasant meanings writ
In winning words, since through her gentleness,
Thee she accepts as for her service fit!
Oh! it repents me I have neither wit
Nor leisure unto thee more worth to give;
For of all good she is the best alive.

Beseech her meekly with all lowliness,
Though I be far from her I reverence,
To think upon my truth and steadfastness,
And to abridge my sorrow's violence,
Caused by the wish, as knows your sapience,
She of her liking proof to me would give;
For of all good she is the best alive.

L'ENVOY

Pleasure's Aurora, Day of gladness!
Luna by night, with heavenly influence
Illumined! root of beauty and goodness,
Write, and allay by your beneficence
My sighs breathed forth in silence,—
comfort give!
Since of all good you are the best alive.

EXPLICIT

III

TROILUS AND CRESIDA

[Written 1801.—Same dates of publication as II.]

Next morning Troilus began to clear
His eyes from sleep, at the first break of day,

And unto Pandarus, his own Brother dear,
For love of God, full piteously did say,
We must the Palace see of Cresida;
For since we yet may have no other feast,
Let us behold her Palace at the least!

And therewithal to cover his intent!
A cause he found into the Town to go,
And they right forth to Cresid's Palace went;

But, Lord, this simple Troilus was woe,
Him thought his sorrowful heart would break in two;

For when he saw her doors fast bolted all,
Well nigh for sorrow down he 'gan to fall.

Therewith when this true Lover 'gan behold,
How shut was every window of the place,
Like frost he thought his heart was icy cold;

¹ His *meiny* for to blend (Chaucer); i.e. to hoodwink his followers.—ED.

TROILUS AND CRESIDA

For which, with changèd, pale, and
deadly face,
Without word uttered, forth he 'gan to
pace;

And on his purpose bent so fast to ride,
That no wight his continuance¹ espied. 21

Then said he thus,—O Palace desolate!
O house of houses, once so richly dight!
O Palace empty and disconsolate!
Thou lamp of which extinguished is the
light;

O Palace whilom day that now art night,
Thou ought'st to fall and I to die; since
she

Is gone who held us both in sovereignty.

O, of all houses once the crownèd boast!
Palace illumined with the sun of bliss; 30
O ring of which the ruby now is lost,
O cause of woe, that cause has been of
bliss:

Yet, since I may no better, would I kiss
Thy cold doors; but I dare not for this
rout;

Farewell, thou shrine of which the Saint
is out! 35

Therewith he cast on Pandarus an eye,
With changèd face, and piteous to behold;
And when he might his time aright espy,
Aye as he rode, to Pandarus he told
Both his new sorrow and his joys of old,
So piteously, and with so dead a hue, 41
That every wight might on his sorrow rue.

Forth from the spot he rideth up and
down,

And everything to his remembrance
Came as he rode by places of the town
Where he had felt such perfect pleasure
once. 46

Lo, yonder saw I mine own Lady dance,
And in that Temple she with her bright
eyes,

My Lady dear, first bound me captive-
wise.

And yonder with joy-smitten heart have I
Heard my own Cresid's laugh; and once
at play 51

I yonder saw her eke full blissfully;
And yonder once she unto me 'gan say—
Now, my sweet Troilus, love me well, I
pray!

And there so graciously did me behold,
That hers unto the death my heart I
hold. 56

And at the corner of that self-same house
Heard I my most beloved Lady dear,
So womanly, with voice melodious 59
Singing so well, so goodly, and so clear,
That in my soul methinks I yet do hear

The blissful sound; and in that very
place

My Lady first me took unto her grace.

O blissful God of Love! then thus he
cried,

When I the process have in memory, 65
How thou hast wearied me on every side,
Men thence a book might make, a history;
What need to seek a conquest over me,
Since I am wholly at thy will? what joy
Hast thou thy own liege subjects to de-
stroy? 70

Dread Lord! so fearful when provoked,
thine ire

Well hast thou wreaked on me by pain
and grief;

Now mercy, Lord! thou know'st well I
desire

Thy grace above all pleasures first and
chief;

And live and die I will in thy belief; 75
For which I ask for guerdon but one
boon,

That Cresida again thou send me soon.

Constrain her heart as quickly to return,
As thou dost mine with longing her to see,
Then know I well that she would not
sojourn. 80

Now, blissful Lord, so cruel do not be
Unto the blood of Troy, I pray of thee,
As Juno was unto the Theban blood,
From whence to Thebes came griefs in
multitude.

And after this he to the gate did go 85
Whence Cresid rode, as if in haste she
was;

And up and down there went, and to
and fro,

And to himself full oft he said, alas!
From hence my hope and solace forth
did pass.

O would the blissful God now for his joy,
I might her see again coming to Troy! 91

And up to yonder hill was I her guide;
Alas, and there I took of her my leave;
Yonder I saw her to her Father ride,
For very grief of which my heart shall
cleave;— 95

And hither home I came when it was eve;
And here I dwell an outcast from all joy,
And shall, unless I see her soon in Troy.

And of himself did he imagine oft,
That he was blighted, pale, and waxen less
Than he was wont; and that in whispers
soft 101

Men said, what may it be, can no one
guess

Why Troilus hath all this heaviness?
All which he of himself conceited wholly
Out of his weakness and his melancholy.

¹ Countenance (Chaucer).—Ed.

CHAUCER MODERNISED

Another time he took into his head, 106
That every wight, who in the way passed
by,

Had of him ruth, and fancied that they
said,

I am right sorry Troilus will die:
And thus a day or two drove wearily; 110
As ye have heard; such life 'gan he to
lead

As one that standeth betwixt hope and
dread.

For which it pleased him in his songs to
show

The occasion of his woe, as best he might;
And made a fitting song, of words but
few, 115

Somewhat his woeful heart to make more
light;

And when he was removed from all men's
sight,

With a soft voice, he of his Lady dear,
That absent was, 'gan sing as ye may hear.

O star, of which I lost have all the light,
With a sore heart well ought I to bewail,
That ever dark in torment, night by night,
Toward my death with wind I steer and
sail;¹

For which upon the tenth night if thou fail
With thy bright beams to guide me but
one hour, 125

My ship and me Charybdis will devour.

As soon as he this song had thus sung
through,

He fell again into his sorrows old;
And every night, as was his wont to do,
Troilus stood the bright moon to behold;
And all his trouble to the moon he told,
And said: I wis, when thou art horn'd
anew,

I shall be glad if all the world be true.

Thy horns were old as now upon that
morrow,

When hence did journey my bright Lady
dear, 135

That cause is of my torment and my
sorrow;

¹ With wind in stern I sail (Chaucer).—Ed.

For which, oh, gentle Luna, bright and
clear,

For love of God, run fast above thy
sphere;

For when thy horns begin once more to
spring,

Then shall she come, that with her bliss
may bring. 140

The day is more, and longer every night
Than they were wont to be—for he
thought so;

And that the sun did take his course not
right,

By longer way than he was wont to go;
And said, I am in constant dread I trow,
That Phæton his son is yet alive, 146
His too fond father's car amiss to drive.

Upon the walls fast also would he walk,
To the end that he the Grecian host might
see; 149

And ever thus he to himself would talk:—
Lo! yonder is my own bright Lady free;
Or yonder is it that the tents must be;
And thence does come this air which is so
sweet,

That in my soul I feel the joy of it.

And certainly this wind, that more and
more 155

By moments thus increaseth in my
face,

Is of my Lady's sighs heavy and sore;
I prove it thus; for in no other space
Of all this town, save only in this place,
Feel I a wind, that soundeth so like
pain; 160

It saith, Alas, why severed are we twain?

A weary while in pain he tosseth thus,
Till fully passed and gone was the ninth
night;

And ever at his side stood Pandarus,
Who busily made use of all his might 165
To comfort him, and make his heart more
light;

Giving him always hope, that she the
morrow

Of the tenth day will come, and end his
sorrow.

POEMS REFERRING TO THE PERIOD OF OLD AGE

I

THE OLD CUMBERLAND BEGGAR

The class of Beggars, to which the Old Man here described belongs, will probably soon be extinct. It consisted of poor, and, mostly, old and infirm persons, who confined themselves to a stated round in their neighbourhood, and had certain fixed days, on which, at different houses, they regularly received alms, sometimes in money, but mostly in provisions.

[Composed 1797.—Published 1800.]

I SAW an aged Beggar in my walk;
And he was seated, by the highway side,
On a low structure of rude masonry
Built at the foot of a huge hill, that they
Who lead their horses down the steep
rough road⁵
May thence remount at ease. The aged
Man
Had placed his staff across the broad
smooth stone
That overlays the pile; and, from a bag
All white with flour, the dole of village
dames,
He drew his scraps and fragments, one
by one;¹⁰
And scanned them with a fixed and
serious look
Of idle computation. In the sun,
Upon the second step of that small pile,
Surrounded by those wild unpeopled hills,
He sat, and ate his food in solitude:¹⁵
And ever, scattered from his palsied hand,
That, still attempting to prevent the
waste,
Was baffled still, the crumbs in little
showers
Fell on the ground; and the small moun-
tain birds,
Not venturing yet to peck their destined
meal,²⁰
Approached within the length of half his
staff.

Him from my childhood have I known;
and then
He was so old, he seems not older now;
He travels on, a solitary Man,
So helpless in appearance, that for him
The sauntering Horseman throws not
with a slack²⁶
And careless hand his alms upon the
ground,
But stops,—that he may safely lodge the
coin
Within the old Man's hat; nor quits
him so,

But still, when he has given his horse the
rein,³⁰
Watches the aged Beggar with a look
Sidelong, and half-reverted. She who
tends
The toll-gate, when in summer at her
door
She turns her wheel, if on the road she
sees
The aged Beggar coming, quits her work,
And lifts the latch for him that he may
pass.³⁶
The post-boy, when his rattling wheels
o'ertake
The aged Beggar in the woody lane,
Shouts to him from behind; and, if thus
warned
The old man does not change his course,
the boy⁴⁰
Turns with less noisy wheels to the road-
side,
And passes gently by, without a curse
Upon his lips or anger at his heart.

He travels on, a solitary Man;
His age has no companion. On the
ground⁴⁵
His eyes are turned, and, as he moves
along,
They move along the ground; and, ever-
more,
Instead of common and habitual sight
Of fields with rural works, of hill and
dale,
And the blue sky, one little span of earth
Is all his prospect. Thus, from day to
day,⁵¹
Bow-bent, his eyes for ever on the ground,
He plies his weary journey; seeing still,
And seldom knowing that he sees, some
straw,
Some scattered leaf, or marks which, in
one track,⁵⁵
The nails of cart or chariot-wheel have
left
Impressed on the white road,—in the
same line,
At distance still the same. Poor Traveller!
His staff trails with him; scarcely do his
feet
Disturb the summer dust; he is so still⁶⁰
In look and motion, that the cottage curs,
Ere he has passed the door, will turn
away,
Weary of barking at him. Boys and girls,
The vacant and the busy, maids and
youths,

POEMS REFERRING TO THE PERIOD OF OLD AGE

And urchins newly breeched—all pass
him by: 65
Him even the slow-paced waggon leaves
behind.

But deem not this Man useless.—States-
men! ye
Who are so restless in your wisdom, ye
Who have a broom still ready in your
hands

To rid the world of nuisances; ye proud,
Heart-swoln, while in your pride ye con-
template 71

Your talents, power, or wisdom, deem
him not

A burthen of the earth! 'Tis Nature's law
That none, the meanest of created things,
Of forms created the most vile and
brute, 75

The dustiest or most noxious, should exist
Divorced from good—a spirit and pulse
of good,

A life and soul, to every mode of being
Inseparably linked. Then be assured
That least of all can aught—that ever
owned 80

The heaven-regarding eye and front sub-
lime

Which man is born to—sink, howe'er
depressed,

So low as to be scorned without a sin;
Without offence to God cast out of view;
Like the dry remnant of a garden-flower
Whose seeds are shed, or as an imple-
ment 86

Worn out and worthless. While from
door to door,

This old Man creeps, the villagers in him
Behold a record which together binds
Past deeds and offices of charity, 90

Else unremembered, and so keeps alive
The kindly mood in hearts which lapse of
years,

And that half-wisdom half-experience
gives,

Make slow to feel, and by sure steps
resign

To selfishness and cold oblivious cares.
Among the farms and solitary huts, 96
Hamlets and thinly-scattered villages,
Where'er the aged Beggar takes his
rounds,

The mild necessity of use compels
To acts of love; and habit does the work
Of reason; yet prepares that after-joy
Which reason cherishes. And thus the
soul, 102

By that sweet taste of pleasure unpursued,
Doth find herself insensibly disposed
To virtue and true goodness.

Some there are,
By their good works exalted, lofty minds,
And meditative, authors of delight
And happiness, which to the end of time

Will live, and spread, and kindle: even
such minds 109

In childhood, from this solitary Being,
Or from like wanderer, haply have re-
ceived

(A thing more precious far than all that
books

Or the solitudes of love can do!)
That first mild touch of sympathy and
thought,

In which they found their kindred with
a world 115

Where want and sorrow were. The easy
man

Who sits at his own door,—and, like the
pear

That overhangs his head from the green
wall,

Feeds in the sunshine; the robust and
young,

The prosperous and unthinking, they who
live 120

Sheltered, and flourish in a little grove
Of their own kindred;—all behold in
him

A silent monitor, which on their minds
Must needs impress a transitory thought
Of self-congratulation, to the heart 125

Of each recalling his peculiar boons,
His charters and exemptions; and, per-
chance,

Though he to no one give the fortitude
And circumspection needful to preserve
His present blessings, and to husband up
The respite of the season, he, at least, 131
And 'tis no vulgar service, makes them
felt.

Yet further.—Many, I believe, there
are

Who live a life of virtuous decency,
Men who can hear the Decalogue and
feel 135

No self-reproach; who of the moral law
Established in the land where they abide
Are strict observers; and not negligent
In acts of love to those with whom they
dwell,

Their kindred, and the children of their
blood. 140

Praise be to such, and to their slumbers
peace!

—But of the poor man ask, the abject
poor;

Go, and demand of him, if there be here
In this cold abstinence from evil deeds,
And these inevitable charities, 145
Wherewith to satisfy the human soul?

No—man is dear to man; the poorest poor
Long for some moments in a weary life
When they can know and feel that they
have been,

Themselves, the fathers and the dealers-
out 150

POEMS REFERRING TO THE PERIOD OF OLD AGE

Of some small blessings; have been kind
to such
As needed kindness, for this single cause,
That we have all of us one human heart.
—Such pleasure is to one kind Being
known,
My neighbour, when with punctual care,
each week,
Duly as Friday comes, though pressed
herself

By her own wants, she from her store of
meal
Takes one unsparing handful for the scrip
Of this old Mendicant, and, from her door
Returning with exhilarated heart,
Sits by her fire, and builds her hope in
heaven.

Then let him pass, a blessing on his
head!
And while in that vast solitude to which
The tide of things has borne him, he
appears
To breathe and live but for himself alone,
Unblamed, uninjured, let him bear about
The good which the benignant law of
Heaven
Has hung around him: and, while life is
his,
Still let him prompt the unlettered vil-
lagers
To tender offices and pensive thoughts.
—Then let him pass, a blessing on his
head!
And, long as he can wander, let him
breathe
The freshness of the valleys; let his blood
Struggle with frosty air and winter snows;
And let the chartered wind that sweeps
the heath
Beat his grey locks against his withered
face.
Reverence the hope whose vital anxious-
ness
Gives the last human interest to his heart.
May never HOUSE, misnamed of IN-
DUSTRY,
Make him a captive!—for that pent-up
din,
Those life-consuming sounds that clog the
air,
Be his the natural silence of old age!
Let him be free of mountain solitudes;
And have around him, whether heard or
not,
The pleasant melody of woodland birds.
Few are his pleasures: if his eyes have
now
Been doomed so long to settle upon earth
That not without some effort they behold
The countenance of the horizontal sun,
Rising or setting, let the light at least
Find a free entrance to their languid
orbs,

And let him, *where* and *when* he will, sit
- down
Beneath the trees, or on a grassy bank
Of highway side, and with the little birds
Share his chance-gathered meal; and,
finally,
As in the eye of Nature he has lived,
So in the eye of Nature let him die!

II

THE FARMER OF TILSBURY VALE

[Composed 1800.—Published July 21, 1800
(*Morning Post*); ed. 1815.]

'Tis not for the unfeeling, the falsely
refined,
The squeamish in taste, and the narrow
of mind,
And the small critic wielding his delicate
pen,
That I sing of old Adam, the pride of old
men.
He dwells in the centre of London's wide
Town;
His staff is a sceptre—his grey hairs a
crown;
And his bright eyes look brighter, set off
by the streak
Of the unfaded rose that still blooms on
his cheek.
'Mid the dews, in the sunshine of morn,—
'mid the joy
Of the fields, he collected that bloom,
when a boy;
That countenance there fashioned, which,
spite of a stain
That his life hath received, to the last
will remain.
A Farmer he was; and his house far and
near
Was the boast of the country for excellent
cheer;
How oft have I heard in sweet Tilsbury
Vale
Of the silver-rimmed horn whence he
dealt his mild ale!
Yet Adam was far as the farthest from
ruin,
His fields seemed to know what their
Master was doing;
And turnips, and corn-land, and meadow,
and lea,
All caught the infection—as generous as
he.
Yet Adam prized little the feast and the
bowl,—
The fields better suited the ease of his
soul:
He strayed through the fields like an
indolent wight,
The quiet of nature was Adam's delight.

POEMS REFERRING TO THE PERIOD OF OLD AGE

For Adam was simple in thought; and
the poor,²⁵
Familiar with him, made an inn of his
door:

He gave them the best that he had; or,
to say
What less may mislead you, they took it
away.

Thus thirty smooth years did he thrive
on his farm:

The Genius of plenty preserved him from
harm:³⁰

At length, what to most is a season of
sorrow,

His means are run out,—he must beg, or
must borrow.

To the neighbours he went,—all were free
with their money;

For his hive had so long been replenished
with honey,

That they dreamt not of dearth;—He
continued his rounds,³⁵

Knocked here—and knocked there,
pounds still adding to pounds.

He paid what he could with his ill-gotten
pelf,

And something, it might be, reserved for
himself:

Then (what is too true) without hinting a
word,

Turned his back on the country—and off
like a bird.⁴⁰

You lift up your eyes!—but I guess that
you frame

A judgment too harsh of the sin and the
shame;

In him it was scarcely a business of art,
For this he did all in the *ease* of his
heart.

To London—a sad emigration I ween—
With his grey hairs he went from the
brook and the green;⁴⁶

And there, with small wealth but his legs
and his hands,

As lonely he stood as a crow on the sands.

All trades, as need was, did old Adam
assume,—

Served as stable-boy, errand-boy, porter,
and groom;⁵⁰

But nature is gracious, necessity kind,
And, in spite of the shame that may lurk
in his mind,

He seems ten birthdays younger, is green
and is stout;

Twice as fast as before does his blood run
about;

You would say that each hair of his beard
was alive,⁵⁵

And his fingers as busy as bees in a hive.

For he's not like an Old Man that leisurely
goes

About work that he knows, in a track
that he knows;

But often his mind is compelled to demur,
And you guess that the more then his
body must stir.⁶⁰

In the throng of the town like a stranger
is he,

Like one whose own country's far over
the sea;

And Nature, while through the great city
he hies,

Full ten times a day takes his heart by
surprise.

This gives him the fancy of one that is
young,⁶⁵

More of soul in his face than of words on
his tongue;

Like a maiden of twenty he trembles and
sighs,

And tears of fifteen will come into his
eyes.

What's a tempest to him, or the dry
parching heats?

Yet he watches the clouds that pass over
the streets;⁷⁰

With a look of such earnestness often will
stand,

You might think he'd twelve reapers at
work in the Strand.

Where proud Covent-garden, in desolate
hours

Of snow and hoar-frost, spreads her fruits
and her flowers,

Old Adam will smile at the pains that
have made⁷⁵

Poor winter look fine in such strange
masquerade.

'Mid coaches and chariots, a waggon of
straw,

Like a magnet, the heart of old Adam
can draw;

With a thousand soft pictures his memory
will teem,

And his hearing is touched with the
sounds of a dream.⁸⁰

Up the Haymarket hill he oft whistles his
way,

Thrusts his hands in a waggon, and smells
at the hay;

He thinks of the fields he so often hath
mown,

And is happy as if the rich freight were
his own.

But chiefly to Smithfield he loves to
repair,—⁸⁵

If you pass by at morning, you'll meet
with him there.

POEMS REFERRING TO THE PERIOD OF OLD AGE

The breath of the cows you may see him
inhale,
And his heart all the while is in Tilsbury
Vale.

Now farewell, old Adam! when low thou
art laid,
May one blade of grass spring up over
thy head;
And I hope that thy grave, wheresoever
it be,
Will hear the wind sigh through the leaves
of a tree.

III

THE SMALL CELANDINE

[Composed 1804.—Published 1807.]

THERE is a Flower, the lesser Celandine,
That shrinks, like many more, from cold
and rain;
And, the first moment that the sun may
shine,
Bright as the sun himself, 'tis out again!
When hailstones have been falling, swarm
on swarm,
Or blasts the green field and the trees
distrest,
Oft have I seen it muffled up from harm,
In close self-shelter, like a Thing at rest.
But lately, one rough day, this Flower I
passed
And recognised it, though an altered
form,
Now standing forth an offering to the
blast,
And buffeted at will by rain and storm.
I stopped, and said with inly-muttered
voice,
'It doth not love the shower, nor seek
the cold:
This neither is its courage nor its choice,
But its necessity in being old
'The sunshine may not cheer it, nor the
dew;
It cannot help itself in its decay;
Stiff in its members, withered, changed
of hue.'
And, in my spleen, I smiled that it was
grey.
To be a Prodigal's Favourite—then, worse
truth,
A Miser's Pensioner—behold our lot!
O Man, that from thy fair and shining
youth
Age might but take the things Youth
needed not!

IV

THE TWO THIEVES

OR

THE LAST STAGE OF AVARICE

[Composed 1800.—Published 1800.]

O NOW that the genius of Bewick were
mine,
And the skill which he learned on the
banks of the Tyne,
Then the Muses might deal with me just
as they chose,
For I'd take my last leave both of verse
and of prose.
What feats would I work with my magical
hand!
Book-learning and books should be
banished the land:
And, for hunger and thirst and such
troublesome calls,
Every ale-house should then have a feast
on its walls.
The traveller would hang his wet clothes
on a chair;
Let them smoke, let them burn, not a
straw would he care!
For the Prodigal Son, Joseph's Dream
and his sheaves,
Oh, what would they be to my tale of two
Thieves?
The One, yet unbreeched, is not three
birthdays old,
His Grandsire that age more than thirty
times told;
There are ninety good seasons of fair and
foul weather
Between them, and both go a-pilfering
together.
With chips is the carpenter strewing his
floor?
Is a cart-load of turf at an old woman's
door?
Old Daniel his hand to the treasure will
slide!
And his Grandson's as busy at work by
his side.
Old Daniel begins; he stops short—and
his eye,
Through the lost look of dotage, is cun-
ning and sly:
'Tis a look which at this time is hardly
his own,
But tells a plain tale of the days that are
flown.
He once had a heart which was moved by
the wires
Of manifold pleasures and many desires:
And what if he cherished his purse?
'Twas no more
Than treading a path trod by thousands
before.

POEMS REFERRING TO THE PERIOD OF OLD AGE

'Twas a path trod by thousands; but
 Daniel is one
 Who went something farther than others
 have gone, 30
 And now with old Daniel you see how it
 fares;
 You see to what end he has brought his
 grey hairs.

Old Man! whom so oft I with pity have
 eyed,
 I love thee, and love the sweet Boy at thy 45
 side:
 Long yet may'st thou live! for a teacher
 we see
 That lifts up the veil of our nature in thee.

The pair sally forth hand in hand: ere
 the sun
 Has peered o'er the beeches, their work is
 begun:

And yet, into whatever sin they may
 fall, 35
 This child but half knows it, and that not
 at all.

They hunt through the streets with
 deliberate tread,
 And each, in his turn, becomes leader or
 led;

And, wherever they carry their plots and
 their wiles,
 Every face in the village is dimpled with
 smiles. 40

Neither checked by the rich nor the needy
 they roam;

For the grey-headed Sire has a daughter
 at home,

Who will gladly repair all the damage
 that's done;

And three, were it asked, would be
 rendered for one.

V ANIMAL TRANQUILLITY AND DECAY

[Composed 1798 (? 1797).—Published 1798.]

THE little hedgerow birds,
 That peck along the road, regard him
 not.

He travels on, and in his face, his step,
 His gait, is one expression: every limb,
 His look and bending figure, all bespeak
 A man who does not move with pain, but
 moves 6

With thought.—He is insensibly subdued
 To settled quiet: he is one by whom
 All effort seems forgotten; one to whom
 Long patience hath such mild composure
 given, 10

That patience now doth seem a thing of
 which

He hath no need. He is by nature led
 To peace so perfect that the young behold
 With envy, what the Old Man hardly
 feels.

EPITAPHS AND ELEGIAC PIECES

EPITAPHS

TRANSLATED FROM CHIABRERA

I

[Composed (?).—Published 1837.]

WEEP not, beloved Friends! nor let the
 air
 For me with sighs be troubled. Not from
 life

Have I been taken; this is genuine life
 And this alone—the life which now I live
 In peace eternal; where desire and joy 5
 Together move in fellowship without
 end.—

Francesco Ceni willed that, after death,
 His tombstone thus should speak for him.

And surely

Small cause there is for that fond wish of
 ours

Long to continue in this world; a world
 That keeps not faith, nor yet can point a
 hope 11

To good, whereof itself is destitute.

II

[Composed 1809 or 1810.—Published February 22,
 1810 (*The Friend*); ed. 1815.]

PERHAPS some needful service of the State
 Drew TITUS from the depth of studious
 bowers,
 And doomed him to contend in faithless
 courts,

Where gold determines between right and
 wrong.

Yet did at length his loyalty of heart 5
 And his pure native genius, lead him
 back

To wait upon the bright and gracious
 Muses,

Whom he had early loved. And not in
 vain

Such course he held! Bologna's learned
 schools

Were gladdened by the Sage's voice, and
 hung 10

With fondness on those sweet Nestorian
 strains.

EPITAPHS AND ELEGIAC PIECES

There pleasure crowned his days; and all
his thoughts
A roseate fragrance breathed.¹—O human
life,
That never art secure from dolorous
change!
Behold a high injunction suddenly 15
To Arno's side hath brought him, and he
charmed
A Tuscan audience: but full soon was
called
To the perpetual silence of the grave.
Mourn, Italy, the loss of him who stood
A Champion steadfast and invincible, 20
To quell the rage of literary War!

III

[Composed 1809 or 1810.—Published February 22,
1810 (*The Friend*); ed. 1815.]

O THOU who movest onward with a mind
Intent upon thy way, pause, though in
haste!
'Twill be no fruitless moment. I was
born
Within Savona's walls, of gentle blood.
On Tiber's banks my youth was dedicate
To sacred studies; and the Roman Shep-
herd 6
Gave to my charge Urbino's numerous
flock.
Well did I watch, much laboured, nor
had power
To escape from many and strange indig-
nities;
Was smitten by the great ones of the
world, 10
But did not fall; for Virtue braves all
shocks,
Upon herself resting immovably.
Me did a kindlier fortune then invite
To serve the glorious Henry, King of
France,

And in his hands I saw a high reward 15
Stretched out for my acceptance,—but
Death came.

Now, Reader, learn from this my fate,
how false,
How treacherous to her promise, is the
world;
And trust in God—to whose eternal doom
Must bend the sceptred Potentates of
earth. 20

IV

[Composed 1809.—Published December 28, 1809
(*The Friend*); ed. 1815.]

THERE never breathed a man who, when
his life
Was closing, might not of that life relate
Toils long and hard.—The warrior will
report

¹ Ivi vivea giocondo e i suoi pensieri
Erano tutti rose.

The Translator had not skill to come nearer to his
original.

Of wounds, and bright swords flashing in
the field,
And blast of trumpets. He who hath
been doomed 5
To bow his forehead in the courts of kings,
Will tell of fraud and never-ceasing hate,
Envy and heart-inquietude, derived
From intricate cabals of treacherous
friends.
I, who on shipboard lived from earliest
youth, 10
Could represent the countenance horrible
Of the vexed waters, and the indignant
rage
Of Auster and Boötes. Fifty years
Over the well-steered galleys did I rule:—
From huge Pelorus to the Atlantic
pillars, 15
Rises no mountain to mine eyes unknown;
And the broad gulfs I traversed oft and
oft.
Of every cloud which in the heavens
might stir
I knew the force; and hence the rough
sea's pride
Availed not to my Vessel's overthrow. 20
What noble pomp and frequent have
not I
On regal decks beheld! yet in the end
I learned that one poor moment can
suffice
To equalize the lofty and the low.
We sail the sea of life—a *Calm* One
finds, 25
And One a *Tempest*—and, the voyage o'er,
Death is the quiet haven of us all.
If more of my condition ye would know,
Savona was my birthplace, and I sprang
Of noble parents: seventy years and three
Lived I—then yielded to a slow disease.

V

[Composed (?).—Published 1837.]

TRUE is it that Ambrosio Salinero
With an untoward fate was long involved
In odious litigation; and full long,
Fate harder still! had he to endure as-
saults
Of racking malady. And true it is 5
That not the less a frank courageous heart
And buoyant spirit triumphed over pain;
And he was strong to follow in the steps
Of the fair Muses. Not a covert path
Leads to the dear Parnassian forest's
shade, 10
That might from him be hidden; not a
track
Mounts to pellucid Hippocrene, but he
Had traced its windings.—This Savona
knows,
Yet no sepulchral honours to her Son
She paid, for in our age the heart is ruled

EPITAPHS AND ELEGIAC PIECES

Only in gold. And now a simple stone
Inscribed with this memorial here is
raised 17

By his bereft, his lonely, Chiabrera.
Think not, O Passenger! who read'st the
lines

That an exceeding love hath dazzled me;
No—he was One whose memory ought to
spread 21

Where'er Permessus bears an honoured
name,
And live as long as its pure stream shall
flow.

VI

[Composed 1809.—Published December 28, 1809
(*The Friend*); ed. 1815.]

DESTINED to war from very infancy
Was I, Roberto Dati, and I took
In Malta the white symbol of the Cross:
Nor in life's vigorous season did I shun
Hazard or toil; among the sands was seen
Of Lybia; and not seldom, on the banks
Of wide Hungarian Danube, 'twas my lot
To hear the sanguinary trumpet sounded.
So lived I, and repined not at such fate:
This only grieves me, for it seems a
wrong, 10

That stripped of arms I to my end am
brought

On the soft down of my paternal home.
Yet haply Arno shall be spared all cause
To blush for me. Thou, loiter not nor halt
In thy appointed way, and bear in mind
How fleeting and how frail is human life!

VII

[Composed (?).—Published 1837.]

O FLOWER of all that springs from gentle
blood,
And all that generous nurture breeds to
make

Youth amiable; O friend so true of soul
To fair Aglaia; by what envy moved,
Lelius! has death cut short thy brilliant
day 5

In its sweet opening? and what dire
mishap

Has from Savona torn her best delight?
For thee she mourns, nor e'er will cease
to mourn;

And, should the out-pourings of her eyes
suffice not

For her heart's grief, she will entreat
Sebeto 10

Not to withhold his bounteous aid, Sebeto
Who saw thee, on his margin, yield to
death,

In the chaste arms of thy beloved Love!
What profit riches? what does youth
avail?

Dust are our hopes;—I, weeping bitterly,

Penned these sad lines, nor can forbear
to pray 16

That every gentle Spirit hither led
May read them not without some bitter
tears.

VIII

[Composed 1809.—Published January 4, 1810
(*The Friend*); ed. 1815.]

NOT without heavy grief of heart did He
On whom the duty fell (for at that time
The father sojourned in a distant land)
Deposit in the hollow of this tomb

A brother's Child, most tenderly beloved!
FRANCESCO was the name the Youth had
borne, 6

POZZOBONNELLI his illustrious house;
And, when beneath this stone the Corse
was laid,

The eyes of all Savona streamed with tears.
Alas! the twentieth April of his life 10
Had scarcely flowered: and at this early
time,

By genuine virtue he inspired a hope
That greatly cheered his country: to his
kin

He promised comfort; and the flattering
thoughts

His friends had in their fondness enter-
tained, 15

He suffered not to languish or decay.
Now is there not good reason to break
forth

Into a passionate lament?—O Soul!
Short while a Pilgrim in our nether world,
Do thou enjoy the calm empyreal air; 20

And round this earthly tomb let roses rise,
An everlasting spring! in memory
Of that delightful fragrance which was
once

From thy mild manners quietly exhaled.

IX

[Composed 1809.—Published January 4, 1810
(*The Friend*); ed. 1815.]

PAUSE, courteous Spirit!—Baldi suppli-
cates

That Thou, with no reluctant voice, for
him

Here laid in mortal darkness, wouldst
prefer

A prayer to the Redeemer of the world.
This to the dead by sacred right belongs;

All else is nothing.—Did occasion suit 6
To tell his worth, the marble of this tomb

Would ill suffice: for Plato's lore sublime,
And all the wisdom of the Stagyrte,

Enriched and beautified his studious
mind: 10

¹ In justice to the Author, I subjoin the original:
e degli amici
Non lasciava languire i bel pensieri.

EPITAPHS AND ELEGIAC PIECES

With Archimedes also he conversed
As with a chosen friend; nor did he leave
Those laureat wreaths ungathered which
the Nymphs

Twine near their loved Permessus.—
Finally,
Himself above each lower thought up-
lifting, 15

His ears he closed to listen to the songs
Which Sion's Kings did consecrate of old;
And his Permessus found on Lebanon.
A blessed Man! who of protracted days
Made not, as thousands do, a vulgar
sleep; 20

But truly did *He* live his life. Urbino,
Take pride in him!—O Passenger, fare-
well!

I

[Composed (?).—Published 1835.]

By a blest Husband guided, Mary came
From nearest kindred, Vernon her new
name;
She came, though meek of soul, in seemly
pride

Of happiness and hope, a youthful Bride.
O dread reverse! if aught *be* so, which
proves 5

That God will chasten whom he dearly
loves.

Faith bore her up through pains in mercy
given,

And troubles that were each a step to
Heaven:

Two Babes were laid in earth before she
died;

A third now slumbers at the Mother's
side; 10

Its Sister-twin survives, whose smiles
afford

A trembling solace to her widowed Lord.

Reader! if to thy bosom cling the pain
Of recent sorrow combated in vain;

Or if thy cherished grief have failed to
thwart 15

Time still intent on his insidious part,
Lulling the mourner's best good thoughts

asleep,
Pilfering regrets we would, but cannot,
keep;

Bear with Him—judge *Him* gently who
makes known

His bitter loss by this memorial Stone; 20
And pray that in his faithful breast the

grace
Of resignation find a hallowed place.

II

[Composed 1812 (?).—Published 1837.]

Six months to six years added he re-
mained

Upon this sinful earth, by sin unstained:

O blessed Lord! whose mercy then re-
moved

A Child whom every eye that looked on
loved;

Support us, teach us calmly to resign
What we possessed, and now is wholly
thine!

III

CENOTAPH

In affectionate remembrance of Frances Fermor,
whose remains are deposited in the church of
Claines, near Worcester, this stone is erected by
her sister, Dame Margaret, wife of Sir George
Beaumont, Bart., who, feeling not less than the
love of a brother for the deceased, commands
this memorial to the care of his heirs and suc-
cessors in the possession of this place.

[Composed 1824.—Published 1842.]

By vain affections unenthralled,
Though resolute when duty called

To meet the world's broad eye,
Pure as the holiest cloistered nun

That ever feared the tempting sun, 5
Did Fermor live and die.

This Tablet, hallowed by her name,
One heart-relieving tear may claim;

But if the pensive gloom
Of fond regret be still thy choice, 10

Exalt thy spirit, hear the voice
Of Jesus from her tomb!

'I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE
LIFE.'

IV

EPITAPH

IN THE CHAPEL-YARD OF LANGDALE,
WESTMORELAND

[Composed 1841.—Published: vol. of 1842.]

By playful smiles, (alas! too oft
A sad heart's sunshine) by a soft

And gentle nature, and a free
Yet modest hand of charity,

Through life was OWEN LLOYD endeared
To young and old; and how revered 6

Had been that pious spirit, a tide
Of humble mourners testified,

When, after pains dispensed to prove
The measure of God's chastening love,

Here, brought from far, his course found
rest,— 11

Fulfilment of his own request;—
Urged less for this Yew's shade, though he

Planted with such fond hope the tree;
Less for the love of stream and rock, 15

Dear as they were, than that his Flock,
When they no more their Pastor's voice

Could hear to guide them in their choice
Through good and evil, help might have,

Admonished, from his silent grave, 20
Of righteousness, of sins forgiven,

For peace on earth and bliss in heaven.

EPITAPHS AND ELEGIAC PIECES

V

ADDRESS TO THE SCHOLARS OF THE VILLAGE SCHOOL OF—

[Composed 1798.—Published: vol. of 1842.]

I COME, ye little noisy Crew,
Not long your pastime to prevent;
I heard the blessing which to you
Our common Friend and Father sent.
I kissed his cheek before he died;
And when his breath was fled,
I raised, while kneeling by his side,
His hand:—it dropped like lead.
Your hands, dear Little-ones, do all
That can be done, will never fall
Like his till they are dead.
By night or day, blow foul or fair,
Ne'er will the best of all your train
Play with the locks of his white hair,
Or stand between his knees again.

Here did he sit confined for hours;
But he could see the woods and plains,
Could hear the wind and mark the showers
Come streaming down the streaming
panes.

Now stretched beneath his grass-green
mound

He rests a prisoner of the ground.
He loved the breathing air,
He loved the sun, but if it rise
Or set, to him where now he lies,
Brings not a moment's care.
Alas! what idle words; but take
The Dirge which for our Master's sake
And yours, love prompted me to make.
The rhymes so homely in attire
With learned ears may ill agree,
But chanted by your Orphan Quire
Will make a touching melody.

DIRGE

Mourn, Shepherd, near thy old grey stone;
Thou Angler, by the silent flood;
And mourn when thou art all alone, 35
Thou Woodman, in the distant wood!

Thou one blind Sailor, rich in joy
Though blind, thy tunes in sadness hum;
And mourn, thou poor half-witted Boy!
Born deaf, and living deaf and dumb. 40

Thou drooping sick Man, bless the Guide
Who checked or turned thy headstrong
youth,

As he before had sanctified
Thy infancy with heavenly truth.

Ye Striplings, light of heart and gay, 45
Bold settlers on some foreign shore,
Give, when your thoughts are turned this
way,

A sigh to him whom we deplore.

For us who here in funeral strain
With one accord our voices raise, 50
Let sorrow overcharged with pain
Be lost in thankfulness and praise.

And when our hearts shall feel a sting
From ill we meet or good we miss,
May touches of his memory bring 55
Fond healing, like a mother's kiss.

BY THE SIDE OF THE GRAVE SOME YEARS AFTER

Long time his pulse hath ceased to beat;
But benefits, his gift, we trace—
Expressed in every eye we meet
Round this dear Vale, his native place. 60

To stately Hall and Cottage rude
Flowed from his life what still they hold,
Light pleasures, every day renewed;
And blessings half a century old.

Oh true of heart, of spirit gay, 65
Thy faults, where not already gone
From memory, prolong their stay
For charity's sweet sake alone.

Such solace find we for our loss;
And what beyond this thought we crave
Comes in the promise from the Cross, 71
Shining upon thy happy grave.¹

VI

ELEGIAC STANZAS

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF PEELE
CASTLE, IN A STORM, PAINTED BY
SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT

[Composed 1805.—Published 1807.]

I WAS thy neighbour once, thou rugged
Pile!

Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of
thee:

I saw thee every day; and all the while
Thy Form was sleeping on a glassy sea.

So pure the sky, so quiet was the air! 5
So like, so very like, was day to day!
Whene'er I looked, thy Image still was
there;

It trembled, but it never passed away.

How perfect was the calm! it seemed no
sleep;

No mood, which season takes away, or
brings: 10

I could have fancied that the mighty Deep
Was even the gentlest of all gentle
Things.

Ah! then, if mine had been the Painter's
hand,

To express what then I saw; and add
the gleam, 14

The light that never was, on sea or land,
The consecration, and the Poet's dream;

¹ See upon the subject of the three foregoing pieces
'Matthew,' &c., &c., pp. 381, 382.

EPITAPHS AND ELEGIAC PIECES

I would have planted thee, thou hoary
Pile

Amid a world how different from this!
Beside a sea that could not cease to smile;
On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss.

Thou shouldst have seemed a treasure-
house divine²¹
Of peaceful years; a chronicle of
heaven;—

Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine
The very sweetest had to thee been given.

A Picture had it been of lasting ease,²⁵
Elysian quiet, without toil or strife;
No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,
Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.

Such, in the fond illusion of my heart,
Such Picture would I at that time have
made:³⁰

And seen the soul of truth in every part,
A steadfast peace that might not be
betrayed.

So once it would have been,—'tis so no
more;

I have submitted to a new control:
A power is gone, which nothing can
restore;³⁵

A deep distress hath humanised my Soul.

Not for a moment could I now behold
A smiling sea, and be what I have been:
The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old;
This, which I know, I speak with mind
serene.⁴⁰

Then, Beaumont, Friend! who would
have been the Friend,

If he had lived, of Him whom I deplore,
This work of thine I blame not, but commend;

This sea in anger, and that dismal shore.

O 'tis a passionate Work!—yet wise and
well,⁴⁵

Well chosen is the spirit that is here;
That Hulk which labours in the deadly
swell,

This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear!

And this huge Castle, standing here
sublime,

I love to see the look with which it
braves,⁵⁰

Cased in the unfeeling armour of old
time,

The lightning, the fierce wind, and tramp-
ling waves.

Farewell, farewell the heart that lives
alone,

Housed in a dream, at distance from the
Kind!

Such happiness, wherever it be known,
Is to be pitied; for 'tis surely blind.⁵⁶

But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,
And frequent sights of what is to be
borne!

Such sights, or worse, as are before me
here.—

Not without hope we suffer and we
mourn.⁶⁰

VII

TO THE DAISY

[Composed 1805.—Published 1815.]

SWEET Flower! belike one day to have

A place upon thy Poet's grave,
I welcome thee once more:

But He, who was on land, at sea,
My Brother, too, in loving thee,
Although he loved more silently,⁵
Sleeps by his native shore.

Ah! hopeful, hopeful was the day
When to that Ship he bent his way,
To govern and to guide:¹⁰

His wish was gained: a little time
Would bring him back in manhood's
prime

And free for life, these hills to climb,
With all his wants supplied.

And full of hope day followed day¹⁵
While that stout Ship at anchor lay
Beside the shores of Wight;

The May had then made all things green;
And, floating there, in pomp serene,
That Ship was goodly to be seen,²⁰
His pride and his delight!

Yet then, when called ashore, he sought
The tender peace of rural thought:
In more than happy mood

To your abodes, bright daisy Flowers!²⁵
He then would steal at leisure hours,
And loved you glittering in your bowers,
A starry multitude.

But hark the word!—the ship is gone;—
Returns from her long course:—anon³⁰

Sets sail:—in season due,
Once more on English earth they stand:
But, when a third time from the land
They parted, sorrow was at hand³⁵
For Him and for his crew.

Ill-fated Vessel!—ghastly shock!
—At length delivered from the rock,

The deep she hath regained;
And through the stormy night they steer;

Labouring for life, in hope and fear,⁴⁰
To reach a safer shore—how near,
Yet not to be attained!

'Silence!' the brave Commander cried;
To that calm word a shriek replied,

It was the last death-shriek.⁴⁵
—A few (my soul oft sees that sight)
Survive upon the tall mast's height;

But one dear remnant of the night—
For Him in vain I seek.

EPITAPHS AND ELEGIAC PIECES

Six weeks beneath the moving sea 50
He lay in slumber quietly;
Unforced by wind or wave
To quit the Ship for which he died,
(All claims of duty satisfied;)
And there they found him at her side; 55
And bore him to the grave.

Vain service! yet not vainly done
For this, if other end were none,
That He, who had been cast
Upon a way of life unmeet 60
For such a gentle Soul and sweet,
Should find an undisturbed retreat
Near what he loved, at last—

That neighbourhood of grove and field
To Him a resting-place should yield, 65
A meek man and a brave!
The birds shall sing and ocean make
A mournful murmur for his sake;
And Thou, sweet Flower, shalt sleep and
wake
Upon his senseless grave. 70

VIII

ELEGIAC VERSES

IN MEMORY OF MY BROTHER, JOHN
WORDSWORTH

Commander of the E. I. Company's ship, the
Earl of Abergavenny, in which he perished by
calamitous shipwreck, Feb. 6th, 1805. Com-
posed near the Mountain track, that leads from
Grasmere through Grisdale Hawes, where it
descends towards Patterdale.

[Composed 1805.—Published: vol. of 1842.]

I

THE Sheep-boy whistled loud, and lo!
That instant, startled by the shock,
The Buzzard mounted from the rock
Deliberate and slow:
Lord of the air, he took his flight;
Oh! could he on that woeful night 5
Have lent his wing, my Brother dear,
For one poor moment's space to Thee,
And all who struggled with the Sea,
When safety was so near. 10

II

Thus in the weakness of my heart
I spoke (but let that pang be still)
When rising from the rock at will,
I saw the Bird depart.
And let me calmly bless the Power 15
That meets me in this unknown Flower,
Affecting type of him I mourn!
With calmness suffer and believe,
And grieve, and know that I must grieve,
Not cheerless, though forlorn. 20

III

Here did we stop; and here looked round
While each into himself descends,

For that last thought of parting Friends
That is not to be found. 24
Hidden was Grasmere Vale from sight,
Our home and his, his heart's delight,
His quiet heart's selected home.
But time before him melts away,
And he hath feeling of a day
Of blessedness to come. 30

IV

Full soon in sorrow did I weep,
Taught that the mutual hope was dust,
In sorrow, but for higher trust,
How miserably deep!
All vanished in a single word, 35
A breath, a sound, and scarcely heard.
Sea—Ship—drowned—Shipwreck—so it
came,
The meek, the brave, the good, was gone;
He who had been our living John
Was nothing but a name. 40

V

That was indeed a parting! oh,
Glad am I, glad that it is past;
For there were some on whom it cast
Unutterable woe.
But they as well as I have gains;— 45
From many a humble source, to pains
Like these, there comes a mild release;
Even here I feel it, even this Plant
Is in its beauty ministrant
To comfort and to peace. 50

VI

He would have loved thy modest grace,
Meek Flower! To Him I would have
said,
'It grows upon its native bed
Beside our Parting-place;
There, cleaving to the ground, it lies 55
With multitude of purple eyes,
Spangling a cushion green like moss;
But we will see it, joyful tide!
Some day, to see it in its pride, 60
The mountain will we cross.'

VII

—Brother and friend, if verse of mine
Have power to make thy virtues known,
Here let a monumental Stone
Stand—sacred as a Shrine;
And to the few who pass this way, 65
Traveller or Shepherd, let it say,
Long as these mighty rocks endure,—
Oh do not Thou too fondly brood,
Although deserving of all good,
On any earthly hope, however pure!¹ 70

¹ The plant alluded to is the Moss Campion
(*Silene acaulis*, of Linnaeus). See Note, p. 925. See
among the Poems on the 'Naming of Places', No. VI.

EPITAPHS AND ELEGIAC PIECES

IX SONNET

[Composed 1846.—Published 1850.]

WHY should we weep or mourn, Angelic
boy,
For such thou wert ere from our sight
removed,
Holy, and ever dutiful—beloved
From day to day with never-ceasing joy,
And hopes as dear as could the heart
employ
In aught to earth pertaining? Death has
proved
His might, nor less his mercy, as
beheld—
Death conscious that he only could
destroy
The bodily frame. That beauty is laid low
To moulder in a far-off field of Rome; 10
But Heaven is now, blest Child, thy
Spirit's home:
When such divine communion, which we
know,
Is felt, thy Roman burial-place will be
Surely a sweet remembrancer of Thee.

X LINES

Composed at Grasmere, during a walk one Evening, after a stormy day, the Author having just read in a Newspaper that the dissolution of Mr. Fox was hourly expected.

[Composed September (?), 1806.—Published 1807.]

LOUD is the Vale! the Voice is up
With which she speaks when storms are
gone,
A mighty union of streams!
Of all her Voices, One!
Loud is the Vale;—this inland Depth 5
In peace is roaring like the Sea;
Yon star upon the mountain-top
Is listening quietly.
Sad was I, even to pain deprest,
Importunate and heavy load!¹ 10
The Comforter hath found me here,
Upon this lonely road;
And many thousands now are sad—
Wait the fulfilment of their fear;
For he must die who is their stay,
Their glory disappear.
A Power is passing from the earth
To breathless Nature's dark abyss;
But when the great and good depart
What is it more than this—
That Man, who is from God sent forth,
Doth yet again to God return?—
Such ebb and flow must ever be,
Then wherefore should we mourn?

¹ Importuna e grave salma.
MICHAEL ANGELO.

XI INVOCATION TO THE EARTH

FEBRUARY, 1816

[Composed February, 1816.—Published 1816.]

I

'Rest, rest, perturbed Earth!
O rest, thou doleful Mother of Man-
kind!'
A Spirit sang in tones more plaintive than
the wind:
'From regions where no evil thing has
birth
I come—thy stains to wash away, 5
Thy cherished fetters to unbind,
And open thy sad eyes upon a milder
day.
The Heavens are thronged with martyrs
that have risen
From out thy noisome prison;
The penal caverns groan 10
With tens of thousands rent from off the
tree
Of hopeful life,—by battle's whirlwind
blown
Into the deserts of Eternity.
Unpitied havoc! Victims unlamented!
But not on high, where madness is
resented, 15
And murder causes some sad tears to
flow,
Though, from the widely-sweeping blow,
The choirs of Angels spread, triumphantly
augmented.

II

'False Parent of Mankind!
Obdurate, proud, and blind, 20
I sprinkle thee with soft celestial dews,
Thy lost, maternal heart to re-infuse!
Scattering this fair-fetched moisture from
my wings,
Upon the act a blessing I implore, 24
Of which the rivers in their secret springs,
The rivers stained so oft with human gore,
Are conscious;—may the like return no
more!
May Discord—for a Seraph's care
Shall be attended with a bolder prayer—
May she, who once disturbed the seats of
bliss 30
These mortal spheres above,
Be chained for ever to the black abyss!
And thou, O rescued Earth, by peace and
love, 20
And merciful desires, thy sanctity ap-
prove!' 34

The Spirit ended his mysterious rite,
And the pure vision closed in darkness
infinite.

EPITAPHS AND ELEGIAC PIECES

XII LINES

WRITTEN ON A BLANK LEAF IN A COPY
OF THE AUTHOR'S POEM 'THE EX-
CURSION,' UPON HEARING OF THE
DEATH OF THE LATE VICAR OF KENDAL

[Composed November 13, 1814.—Published 1815.]

To public notice, with reluctance strong,
Did I deliver this unfinished Song;
Yet for one happy issue;—and I look
With self-congratulation on the Book
Which pious, learned, MURFITT saw and
read;—

Upon my thoughts his saintly Spirit fed;
He conned the new-born Lay with grate-
ful heart—

Foreboding not how soon he must
depart;

Unweeting that to him the joy was given
Which good men take with them from
earth to heaven.

XIII ELEGIAC STANZAS

(ADDRESSED TO SIR G. H. B. UPON THE
DEATH OF HIS SISTER-IN-LAW)

[Composed probably Dec. 1824.—Published 1827.]

O FOR a dirge! But why complain?
Ask rather a triumphal strain
When FERMOR'S race is run;
A garland of immortal boughs
To twine around the Christian's brows, 5
Whose glorious work is done.

We pay a high and holy debt;
No tears of passionate regret
Shall stain this votive lay;
Ill-worthy, Beaumont! were the grief 10
That flings itself on wild relief
When Saints have passed away.

Sad doom, at Sorrow's shrine to kneel,
For ever covetous to feel,
And impotent to bear! 15
Such once was hers—to think and think
On severed love, and only sink
From anguish to despair!

But nature to its inmost part
Faith had refined; and to her heart 20
A peaceful cradle given:
Calm as the dew-drop's, free to rest
Within a breeze-fanned rose's breast
Till it exhales to Heaven.

Was ever Spirit that could bend
So graciously?—that could descend, 25
Another's need to suit,
So promptly from her lofty throne?—
In works of love, in these alone,
How restless, how minute!

Pale was her hue; yet mortal cheek
Ne'er kindled with a livelier streak
When aught had suffered wrong,—
When aught that breathes had felt a
wound;

Such look the Oppressor might confound,
However proud and strong. 36

But hushed be every thought that springs
From out the bitterness of things;
Her quiet is secure;
No thorns can pierce her tender feet, 40
Whose life was, like the violet, sweet,
As climbing jasmine, pure—

As snowdrop on an infant's grave,
Or lily heaving with the wave
That feeds it and defends; 45
As Vesper, ere the star hath kissed
The mountain top, or breathed the mist
That from the vale ascends.

Thou takest not away, O Death!
Thou strik'st—absence perisheth, 50
Indifference is no more;
The future brightens on our sight;
For on the past hath fallen a light
That tempts us to adore.

XIV ELEGIAC MUSINGS

IN THE GROUNDS OF COLEORTON HALL,
THE SEAT OF THE LATE SIR G. H.
BEAUMONT, BART.

In these grounds stands the Parish Church, wherein
is a mural monument bearing an Inscription
which, in deference to the earnest request of the
deceased, is confined to name, dates, and these
words:—"Enter not into judgment with thy ser-
vant, O Lord!"

[Composed November, 1830.—Published 1835.]

WITH copious eulogy in prose or rhyme
Graven on the tomb we struggle against
Time,

Alas, how feebly! but our feelings rise
And still we struggle when a good man
dies.

Such offering BEAUMONT dreaded and
forbade, 5

A spirit meek in self-abasement clad,
Yet here at least, though few have
numbered days

That shunned so modestly the light of
praise,

His graceful manners, and the temperate
ray

Of that arch fancy which would round
him play, 10

Brightening a converse never known to
swerve

From courtesy and delicate reserve;
30 That sense, the bland philosophy of life,

EPITAPHS AND ELEGIAC POEMS

Which checked discussion ere it warmed
to strife;

Those rare accomplishments, and varied
powers, ¹⁵

Might have their record among sylvan
bowers.

Oh, fled for ever! vanished like a blast
That shook the leaves in myriads as it
passed;—

Gone from this world of earth, air, sea,
and sky,

From all its spirit-moving imagery, ²⁰
Intensely studied with a painter's eye,

A poet's heart; and, for congenial view,
Portrayed with happiest pencil, not
untrue

To common recognitions while the line
Flowed in a course of sympathy divine;—

Oh! severed, too abruptly, from delights
That all the seasons shared with equal
rights;—

Rapt in the grace of undismantled age,
From soul-felt music, and the treasured
page

Lit by that evening lamp which loved to
shed ³⁰

Its mellow lustre round thy honoured
head;

While Friends beheld thee give with eye,
voice, mien,

More than theatric force to Shakspeare's
scene;—

If thou hast heard me—if thy Spirit know
Aught of these bowers and whence their
pleasures flow; ³⁵

If things in our remembrance held so
dear,

And thoughts and projects fondly
cherished here,

To thy exalted nature only seem
Time's vanities, light fragments of earth's
dream—

Rebuke us not!—The mandate is obeyed
That said, 'Let praise be mute where
I am laid;' ⁴¹

The holier deprecation, given in trust
To the cold marble, waits upon thy dust;

Yet have we found how slowly genuine
grief

From *silent* admiration wins relief. ⁴⁵
Too long abashed thy Name is like a rose

That doth 'within itself its sweetness
close;'

A drooping daisy changed into a cup
In which her bright-eyed beauty is shut up.

Within these groves, where still are
fitting by ⁵⁰

Shades of the Past, oft noticed with a sigh,
Shall stand a votive Tablet, haply free,

When towers and temples fall, to speak
of Thee!

If sculptured emblems of our mortal doom
Recall not there the wisdom of the Tomb,

Green ivy risen from out the cheerful earth

Will fringe the lettered stone; and herbs
spring forth,

Whose fragrance, by soft dew and rain
unbound,

Shall penetrate the heart without a wound;
While truth and love their purposes fulfil,

Commemorating genius, talent, skill, ⁶¹
That could not lie concealed where Thou
wert known;

Thy virtues *He* must judge, and *He* alone,
The God upon whose mercy they are
thrown.

XV

WRITTEN AFTER THE DEATH OF CHARLES LAMB

[Composed November, 1835.—Published 1837.]

To a good Man of most dear memory
This Stone is sacred. Here he lies apart

From the great city where he first drew
breath,

Was reared and taught; and humbly
earned his bread,

To the strict labours of the merchant's
desk ⁵

By duty chained. Not seldom did those
tasks

Tease, and the thought of time so spent
depress,

His spirit, but the recompense was high;
Firm Independence, Bounty's rightful
sire;

Affections, warm as sunshine, free as air;
And when the precious hours of leisure
came, ¹¹

Knowledge and wisdom, gained from
converse sweet

With books, or while he ranged the
crowded streets

With a keen eye, and overflowing heart:
So genius triumphed over seeming wrong,

And poured out truth in works by
thoughtful love ¹⁶

Inspired—works potent over smiles and
tears.

And as round mountain-tops the lightning
plays,

Thus innocently sported, breaking forth
As from a cloud of some grave sympathy,

Humour and wild instinctive wit, and all
The vivid flashes of his spoken words. ²²

From the most gentle creature nursed in
fields

Had been derived the name he bore—
a name,

Wherever Christian altars have been
raised, ²⁵

Hallowed to meekness and to innocence;
And if in him meekness at times gave way,

Provoked out of herself by troubles
strange,

Many and strange, that hung about his
life;

EPITAPHS AND ELEGIAC PIECES

Still, at the centre of his being, lodged 30
A soul by resignation sanctified:

And if too often, self-reproached, he felt
That innocence belongs not to our kind,
A power that never ceased to abide in
him,

Charity, 'mid the multitude of sins 35
That she can cover, left not his exposed
To an unforgiving judgment from just
Heaven.

O, he was good, if e'er a good Man lived!

From a reflecting mind and sorrowing
heart

Those simple lines flowed with an earnest
wish, 40

Though but a doubting hope, that they
might serve

Fitly to guard the precious dust of him
Whose virtues called them forth. That
aim is missed;

For much that truth most urgently
required

Had from a faltering pen been asked in
vain: 45

Yet, haply, on the printed page received,
The imperfect record, there, may stand
unblamed

As long as verse of mine shall breathe the
air

Of memory, or see the light of love.

Thou wert a scorner of the fields, my
Friend, 50

But more in show than truth; and from
the fields,

And from the mountains, to thy rural
grave

Transported, my soothed spirit hovers o'er
Its green untrodden turf, and blowing
flowers;

And taking up a voice shall speak (tho'
still 55

Awed by the theme's peculiar sanctity
Which words less free presumed not even
to touch)

Of that fraternal love, whose heaven-lit
lamp

From infancy, through manhood, to the
last

Of threescore years, and to thy latest
hour, 60

Burnt on with ever-strengthening light,
enshrined
Within thy bosom.

'Wonderful' hath been
The love established between man and
man,

'Passing the love of women;' and between
Man and his help-mate in fast wedlock
joined 65

Through God, is raised a spirit and soul
of love

Without whose blissful influence Paradise

Had been no Paradise; and earth were now
A waste where creatures bearing human
form,

Direst of savage beasts, would roam in
fear, 70

Joyless and comfortless. Our days glide on;
And let him grieve who cannot choose
but grieve

That he hath been an Elm without his
Vine,

And her bright dower of clustering
charities,

That, round his trunk and branches,
might have clung 75

Enriching and adorning. Unto thee,
Not so enriched, not so adorned, to thee

Was given (say rather thou of later birth
Wert given to her) a Sister—'tis a word

Timidly uttered, for she *lives*, the meek,
The self-restraining, and the ever-kind;

In whom thy reason and intelligent heart
Found—for all interests, hopes, and

tender cares,
All softening, humanising, hallowing

powers,
Whether withheld, or for her sake un-
sought— 85

More than sufficient recompense!
Her love

(What weakness prompts the voice to tell
it here?)

Was as the love of mothers; and when
years,

Lifting the boy to man's estate, had called
The long-protected to assume the part 90

Of a protector, the first filial tie
Was undissolved; and, in or out of sight,

Remained imperishably interwoven
With life itself. Thus, 'mid a shifting

world,
Did they together testify of time 95

And season's difference—a double tree
With two collateral stems sprung from

one root;
Such were they—such thro' life they *might*

have been
In union, in partition only such;

Otherwise wrought the will of the Most
High; 100

Yet, thro' all visitations and all trials,
Still they were faithful; like two vessels

launched
From the same beach one ocean to explore

With mutual help, and sailing—to their
league

True, as inexorable winds, or bars 105
Floating or fixed of polar ice, allow.

But turn we rather, let my spirit turn
With thine, O silent and invisible Friend!

To those dear intervals, nor rare nor brief,
When reunited, and by choice withdrawn

From miscellaneous converse, ye were
taught 111

EPITAPHS AND ELEGIAC PIECES

That the remembrance of foregone
distress,

And the worse fear of future ill (which oft
Doth hang around it, as a sickly child
Upon its mother) may be both alike 115
Disarmed of power to unsettle present
good

So prized, and things inward and outward
held

In such an even balance, that the heart
Acknowledges God's grace, his mercy
feels,

And in its depth of gratitude is still. 120

O gift divine of quiet sequestration!
The hermit, exercised in prayer and
praise,

And feeding daily on the hope of heaven,
Is happy in his vow, and fondly cleaves
To life-long singleness; but happier far
Was to your souls, and, to the thoughts
of others, 126

A thousand times more beautiful ap-
peared,

Your dual loneliness. The sacred tie
Is broken; yet why grieve? for Time but
holds

His moiety in trust, till Joy shall lead 130
To the blest world where parting is
unknown.

XVI

EXTEMPORE EFFUSION UPON THE DEATH OF JAMES HOGG

[Composed November, 1835.—Published Decem-
ber 12, 1835 (*The Athenæum*); ed. 1837.]

WHEN first, descending from the moor-
lands,

I saw the Stream of Yarrow glide
Along a bare and open valley,
The Ettrick Shepherd was my guide.

When last along its banks I wandered, 5
Through groves that had begun to shed
Their golden leaves upon the pathways,
My steps the Border-minstrel led.

The mighty Minstrel breathes no longer,
'Mid mouldering ruins low he lies; 10
And death upon the braes of Yarrow,
Has closed the Shepherd-poet's eyes:

Nor has the rolling year twice measured,
From sign to sign, its steadfast course,
Since every mortal power of Coleridge 15
Was frozen at its marvellous source;

The rapt One, of the godlike forehead,
The heaven-eyed creature sleeps in earth:
And Lamb, the frolic and the gentle, 20
Has vanished from his lonely hearth.
Like clouds that rake the mountain-
summits,

Or waves that own no curbing hand,
How fast has brother followed brother,
From sunshine to the sunless land!

Yet I, whose lids from infant slumber 25
Were earlier raised, remain to hear
A timid voice, that asks in whispers,
'Who next will drop and disappear?'

Our haughty life is crowned with dark-
ness,

Like London with its own black wreath,
On which with thee, O Crabbe! forth-
looking, 31

I gazed from Hampstead's breezy heath.

As if but yesterday departed,
Thou too art gone before; but why,
O'er ripe fruit, seasonably gathered, 35
Should frail survivors heave a sigh?

Mourn rather for that holy Spirit.
Sweet as the spring, as ocean deep;
For Her who, ere her summer faded,
Has sunk into a breathless sleep. 40

No more of old romantic sorrows,
For slaughtered Youth or love-lorn Maid!
With sharper grief is Yarrow smitten,
And Ettrick mourns with her their Poet
dead.¹

XVII

INSCRIPTION

FOR A MONUMENT IN CROSTHWAITES
CHURCH, IN THE VALE OF KESWICK

[Composed 1843.—Published 1845.]

YE vales and hills whose beauty hither
drew

The poet's steps, and fixed him here, on
you

His eyes have closed! And ye, lov'd
books, no more

Shall Southey feed upon your precious lore,
To works that ne'er shall forfeit their
renown, 5

Adding immortal labours of his own—
Whether he traced historic truth, with zeal
For the State's guidance, or the Church's
weal,

Or Fancy, disciplined by studious art,
Inform'd his pen, or wisdom of the heart,
Or judgments sanctioned in the Patriot's
mind 11

By reverence for the rights of all man-
kind.

Wide were his aims, yet in no human
breast

Could private feelings meet for holier
rest.

His joys, his griefs, have vanished like
a cloud 15

From Skiddaw's top; but he to heaven
was vowed

Through his industrious life, and Christian
faith

Calmed in his soul the fear of change and
death.

¹ See Note, p. 726.

ODE

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

*The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.*

[Composed 1803 (? 1802)—1806.—Published 1807.]

I

THERE was a time when meadow, grove,
and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can
see no more.

II

The Rainbow comes and goes, 10
And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are
bare,
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair; 15
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from
the earth.

III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous
song,
And while the young lambs bound 20
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of
grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought
relief,
And I again am strong:
The cataracts blow their trumpets from
the steep; 25
No more shall grief of mine the season
wrong;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains
throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of
sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea 30
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every Beast keep holiday;—
Thou Child of Joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts,
thou happy Shepherd-boy! 35

IV

Ye blessèd Creatures, I have heard the
call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your
jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal, 40
The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it
all.
Oh evil day! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning,
This sweet May-morning,
And the Children are culling 45
On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines
warm,
And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's
arm:—
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear! 50
—But there's a Tree, of many, one,
A single Field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is
gone:
The Pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat: 55
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

V

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting, 60
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home: 65
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy
But He beholds the light, and whence it
flows,
He sees it in his joy: 70
The Youth, who daily farthest from the
east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended; 74
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

VI

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
 Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
 And, even with something of a Mother's mind,
 And no unworthy aim, 80
 The homely Nurse doth all she can
 To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
 Forget the glories he hath known,
 And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses, 85
 A six years' Darling of a pigmy size!
 See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
 Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
 With light upon him from his father's eyes!
 See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
 Some fragment from his dream of human life, 91
 Shaped by himself with newly-learned art;
 A wedding or a festival,
 A mourning or a funeral;
 And this hath now his heart, 95
 And unto this he frames his song:
 Then will he fit his tongue
 To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
 But it will not be long
 Ere this be thrown aside, 100
 And with new joy and pride
 The little Actor cons another part;
 Filling from time to time his 'humorous stage'
 With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
 That Life brings with her in her equipage;
 As if his whole vocation 106
 Were endless imitation.

VIII

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
 Thy Soul's immensity;
 Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep 110
 Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
 That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
 Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—
 Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
 On whom those truths do rest, 115
 Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
 In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
 Thou, over whom thy Immortality
 Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
 A Presence which is not to be put by; 120
 [To whom the grave

Is but a lonely bed without the sense or sight

Of day or the warm light,
 A place of thought where we in waiting lie; 1

Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might 125
 Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
 Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
 The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
 Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?

Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight, 130
 And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
 Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX

O joy! that in our embers
 Is something that doth live,
 That nature yet remembers 135
 What was so fugitive!
 The thought of our past years in me doth breed

Perpetual benediction: not indeed
 For that which is most worthy to be blest;

Delight and liberty, the simple creed 140
 Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
 With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:—

Not for these I raise
 The song of thanks and praise;
 But for those obstinate questionings
 Of sense and outward things, 146
 Fallings from us, vanishings;
 Blank misgivings of a Creature
 Moving about in worlds not realised,
 High instincts before which our mortal Nature 150

Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised:
 But for those first affections,
 Those shadowy recollections,

Which, be they what they may, 154
 Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
 Are yet a master-light of all our seeing;
 Uphold us, cherish, and have power
 to make

Our noisy years seem moments in the being

Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
 To perish never: 160
 Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,

Nor Man nor Boy,
 Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
 Can utterly abolish or destroy!

¹ Found in edd. 1807 and 1815: omitted from ed. 1820 and all subsequent issues in consequence of Coleridge's adverse criticism. See *Biographia Literaria*, chap. xxii.—ED.

ODE

Hence in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be, ¹⁶⁶
Our Souls have sight of that immortal
sea

Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the Children sport upon the
shore, ¹⁷⁰
And hear the mighty waters rolling ever-
more.

X

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous
song!

And let the young Lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!

We in thought will join your throng, ¹⁷⁵
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-
day

Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was
once so bright

Be now for ever taken from my sight, ¹⁸⁰
Though nothing can bring back the
hour

Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the
flower;

We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy ¹⁸⁵
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;

In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills,
and Groves, ¹⁹¹

Forebode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your
might;

I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.

I love the Brooks which down their
channels fret, ¹⁹⁶

Even more than when I tripped lightly
as they;

The innocent brightness of a new-born
Day

Is lovely yet;

The Clouds that gather round the setting
sun ²⁰⁰

Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mor-
tality;

Another race hath been, and other palms
are won.

Thanks to the human heart by which we
live,

Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and
fears, ²⁰⁵

To me the meanest flower that blows can
give

Thoughts that do often lie too deep for
tears.

APPENDIX: POEMS OF 1793¹

AN EVENING WALK

REPRINTED FROM THE QUARTO OF 1793

AN EVENING WALK. AN EPISTLE; IN VERSE. ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY, FROM
THE LAKES OF THE NORTH OF ENGLAND. BY W. WORDSWORTH, B.A., OF ST. JOHN'S,
CAMBRIDGE. LONDON: PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD. 1793.

ARGUMENT

General Sketch of the Lakes.—Author's Regret of his Youth passed amongst them.—Short descrip-
tion of Noon.—Cascade Scene.—Noontide Retreat.—Precipice and Sloping Lights.—Face of Nature
as the Sun declines.—Mountain Farm, and the Cock.—Slate Quarry.—Sunset.—Superstition of the
Country, connected with that Moment.—Swans.—Female Beggar.—Twilight Objects.—Twilight
Sounds.—Western Lights.—Spirits.—Night.—Moonlight.—Hope.—Night Sounds.—Conclusion.

FAR from my dearest friend, 'tis mine to rove	Staying his silent waves, to hear the roar
Thro' bare grey dell, high wood, and	That stuns the tremulous cliffs of high ⁵
pastoral cove;	Lodore:
His wizard course where hoary Derwent	Where silver rocks the savage prospect
takes	chear
Thro' craggs, and forest glooms, and	Of giant yews that frown on Rydale's
opening lakes,	mere;

¹ The Errata of these Poems are here rectified in the text.—Ed.

AN EVENING WALK

Where peace to Grasmere's lonely island
 leads,
 To willowy hedgerows, and to emerald
 meads; 10
 Leads to her bridge, rude church, and
 cottag'd grounds,
 Her rocky sheepwalks, and her woodland
 bounds;
 Where, bosom'd deep, the shy Winander¹
 peeps
 'Mid clust'ring isles, and holly-sprinkl'd
 steepes;
 Where twilight glens endear my Esth-
 waite's shore, 15
 And memory of departed pleasures, more.

Fair scenes! with other eyes, than once,
 I gaze,
 The ever-varying charm your round
 displays,
 Than when, erewhile, I taught, 'a happy
 child,'
 The echoes of your rocks my carols
 wild: 20
 Then did no ebb of cheerfulness demand
 Sad tides of joy from Melancholy's hand;
 In youth's wild eye the livelong day was
 bright,
 The sun at morning, and the stars of
 night,
 Alike, when first the vales the bittern
 fills, 25
 Or the first woodcocks² roam'd the moon-
 light hills.

Return Delights! with whom my road
 begun,
 When Life rear'd laughing up her morn-
 ing sun;
 When Transport kiss'd away my april tear,
 'Rocking as in a dream the tedious
 year,' 30
 When link'd with thoughtless Mirth I
 cours'd the plain,
 And hope itself was all I knew of pain.
 For then, ev'n then, the little heart would
 beat
 At times, while young Content forsook
 her seat,
 And wild Impatience, panting upward,
 show'd 35
 Where tipp'd with gold the mountain-
 summits glow'd.
 Alas! the idle tale of man is found
 Depicted in the dial's moral round;
 With Hope Reflexion blends her social
 rays
 To gild the total tablet of his days; 40

¹ These lines are only applicable to the middle part of that lake.

² In the beginning of winter, these mountains, in the moonlight nights, are covered with immense quantities of woodcocks; which, in the dark nights, retire into the woods.

Yet still, the sport of some malignant
 Pow'r,
 He knows but from its shade the present
 hour.

While, Memory at my side, I wander here,
 Starts at the simplest sight th' unbidden
 tear, 44
 A form discover'd at the well-known seat,
 A spot, that angles at the riv'let's feet,
 The ray the cot of morning trav'ling nigh,
 And sail that glides the well-known alders
 by.
 But why, ungrateful, dwell on idle pain?
 To shew her yet some joys to me remain,
 Say, will my friend, with soft affection's
 car,
 The history of a poet's ev'ning hear?

When, in the south, the wan noon brood-
 ing still,
 Breath'd a pale steam around the glaring
 hill,
 And shades of deep embattl'd clouds were
 seen 55
 Spotting the northern cliffs with lights
 between;
 Gazing the tempting shades to them
 deny'd,
 When stood the shorten'd herds amid the
 tide,
 Where, from the barren wall's unshelter'd
 end,
 Long rails into the shallow lake extend;
 When schoolboys stretch'd their length
 upon the green 61
 And round the humming elm, a glimmer-
 ing scene!
 In the brown park, in flocks, the troubl'd
 deer
 Shook the still twinkling tail and glancing
 ear;
 When horses in the wall-girt intake³
 stood, 65
 Unshaded, eying far below, the flood,
 Crowded behind the swain, in mute
 distress,
 With forward neck the closing gate to
 press;
 And long, with wistful gaze, his walk
 survey'd,
 Till dipp'd his pathway in the river
 shade; 70
 —Then Quiet led me up the huddling rill,
 Bright'ning with water-breaks the som-
 brous gill⁴;
 To where, while thick above the branches
 close,
 In dark-brown bason its wild waves
 repose,

³ The word *intake* is local, and signifies a moun-
 tain-inclosure.

⁴ Gill is also, I believe, a term confined to this
 country. Glen, gill, and dingle, have the same
 meaning.

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Inverted shrubs, and moss of darkest
green, 75
Cling from the rocks, with pale wood-
weeds between;
Save that, atop, the subtle sunbeams
shine,
On wither'd briars that o'er the craggs
recline;
Sole light admitted here, a small cascade,
Illumes with sparkling foam the twilight
shade. 80
Beyond, along the vistic of the brook,
Where antique roots its bustling path
o'erlook,
The eye reposes on a secret bridge¹
Half grey, half shagg'd with ivy to its
ridge.
—Sweet rill, farewell! To-morrow's noon
again, 85
Shall hide me wooing long thy wildwood
strain;
But now the sun has gain'd his western
road,
And eve's mild hour invites my steps
abroad.
While, near the midway cliff, the silver'd
kite
In many a whistling circle wheels her
flight; 90
Slant wat'ry lights, from parting clouds
a-pace,
Travel along the precipice's base;
Chearing its naked waste of scatter'd
stone
By lichens grey, and scanty moss o'er-
grown,
Where scarce the foxglove peeps, and
thistle's beard, 95
And desert stone-chat, all day long, is
heard.
How pleasant, as the yellowing sun
declines,
And with long rays and shades the land-
scape shines;
To mark the birches' stems all golden
light,
That lit the dark slant woods with silvery
white! 100
The willows weeping trees, that twink-
ling hoar,
Glanc'd oft upturn'd along the breezy
shore,
Low bending o'er the colour'd water, fold
their moveless boughs and leaves like
threads of gold;
The skiffs with naked masts at anchor
laid, 105
Before the boat-house peeping thro' the
shade;

¹ The reader, who has made the tour of this country, will recognize, in this description, the features which characterize the lower waterfall in the gardens of Rydale.

Th' unwearied glance of woodman's
echo'd stroke;
And curling from the trees the cottage
smoke.

Their pannier'd train a groupe of potters
goad,
Winding from side to side up the steep
road; 110
The peasant from yon cliff of fearful edge
Shot, down the headlong pathway darts
his sledge;
Bright beams the lonely mountain horse
illumine,
Feeding 'mid purple heath, 'green rings';
and broom;
While the sharp slope the slacken'd team
confounds, 115
Downward³ the pond'rous timber-wain
resounds;
Beside their sheltering cross⁴ of wall, the
flock
Feeds on in light, nor thinks of winter's
shock;
In foamy breaks the rill, with merry
song,
Dash'd down the rough rock, lightly leaps
along; 120
From lonesome chapel at the mountain's
feet,
Three humble bells their rustic chime
repeat;
Sounds from the water-side the hammer'd
boat;
And blasted quarry thunders heard
remote.

Ev'n here, amid the sweep of endless
woods, 125
Blue pomp of lakes, high cliffs, and fall-
ing floods,
Not undelightful are the simplest charms
Found by the verdant door of mountain
farms.

Sweetly⁵ ferocious round his native walks,
Gaz'd by his sister-wives, the monarch
stalks; 130
Spur clad his nervous feet, and firm his
tread,
A crest of purple tops his warrior head.
Bright sparks his black and haggard eye-
ball hurls
Afar, his tail he closes and unfurls;
Whose state, like pine-trees, waving to
and fro, 135

² 'Vivid rings of green.' GREENWOOD'S Poem on Shooting.

³ 'Down the rough slope the pond'rous waggion rings.' BEATTIE.

⁴ These rude structures, to protect the flocks, are frequent in this country: the traveller may recollect one in Withburne, another upon Whinlatter.

⁵ 'Dolamente feroc.' — TASSO.
In this description of the cock, I remembered a spirited one of the same animal in the l'Agriculture, ou Les Georgiques Françaises of M. Rossuet.

AN EVENING WALK

Droops, and o'er canopies his regal brow,
On tiptoe rear'd he blows his clarion
throat,
Threaten'd by faintly answering farms
remote.

Bright'ning the cliffs between where
sombrous pine,
And yew-trees o'er the silver rocks
recline, ¹⁴⁰
I love to mark the quarry's moving trains,
Dwarf pannier'd steeds, and men, and
numerous wains;

How busy the enormous hive within,
While Echo dallies with the various din!
Some hardly heard their chissel's clink-
ing sound, ¹⁴⁵
Toil, small as pigmies, in the gulph pro-
found;

Some, dim between th' aëreal cliffs
descry'd,
O'erwalk the viewless plank from side to
side;
These by the pale-blue rocks that cease-
less ring
Glad from their airy baskets hang and
sing. ¹⁵⁰

Hung o'er a cloud, above the steep that
rears
It's edge all flame, the broad'ning sun
appears;
A long blue bar it's ægis orb divides,
And breaks the spreading of it's golden
tides;

And now it touches on the purple steep
That flings his shadow on the pictur'd
deep. ¹⁵⁶

Cross the calm lake's blue shades the cliffs
aspire,
With tow'rs and woods a 'prospect all on
fire;'

The coves and secret hollows thro' a ray
Of fainter gold a purple gleam betray;
The gilded turf arrays in richer green ¹⁶¹
Each speck of lawn the broken rocks
between;

Deep yellow beams the scatter'd boles
illumine,

Far in the level forest's central gloom;
Waving his hat, the shepherd in the vale
Directs his winding dog the cliffs to scale,
That, barking busy 'mid the glittering
rocks,

Hunts, where he points, the intercepted
flocks;
Where oaks o'erhang the road the
radiance shoots

On tawny earth, wild weeds, and twisted
roots; ¹⁷⁰

The Druid¹ stones their lighted fane
unfold,

And all the babbling brooks are liquid
gold;
Sunk² to a curve the day-star lessens
still,
Gives one bright glance, and sinks behind
the hill.

In these lone vales, if aught of faith may
claim, ¹⁷⁵
Thin silver hairs, and ancient hamlet
fame;
When up the hills, as now, retreats the
light,
Strange apparitions mock the village
sight.

A desperate form appears, that spurs his
steed,
Along the midway cliffs with violent
speed; ¹⁸⁰
Unhurt pursues his lengthen'd flight,
while all

Attend, at every stretch, his headlong
fall.

Anon, in order mounts a gorgeous show
Of horsemen shadows winding to and
fro;

And now the van is gilt with evening's
beam, ¹⁸⁵
The rear thro' iron brown betrays a sullen
gleam;

Lost³ gradual o'er the heights in pomp
they go,
While silent stands th' admiring vale
below;

Till, but the lonely beacon all is fled,
That tips with eve's last gleam his spiry
head. ¹⁹⁰

Now while the solemn evening Shadows
sail,
On red slow-waving pinions down the
vale,

And, fronting the bright west in stronger
lines,
The oak its dark'ning boughs and foliage
twines,

I love beside the glowing lake to stray,
Where winds the road along the secret
bay; ¹⁹⁶

By rills that tumble down the woody
steeps,
And run in transport to the dimpling
deeps;

Along the 'wild meand'ring' shore to
view,
Obsequious Grace the winding swan
pursue. ²⁰⁰

may fall into the hands of some curious traveller,
who may thank me for informing him, that up the
Duddon, the river which forms the æstuary at
Broughton, may be found some of the most romantic
scenery of these mountains.

¹ From Thomson: see Scott's Critical Essays.
² See a description of an appearance of this kind
in Clark's 'Survey of the Lakes,' accompanied with
vouchers of its veracity that may amuse the reader.

¹ Not far from Broughton is a Druid monument,
of which I do not recollect that any tour descriptive
of this country makes mention. Perhaps this poem

APPENDIX: POEMS OF 1793

He swells his lifted chest, and backward
flings

His bridling neck between his tow'ring
wings;

Stately, and burning in his pride, divides
And glorying looks around, the silent
tides:

On as he floats, the silver'd waters glow,
Proud of the varying arch and moveless
form of snow. 206

While tender Cares and mild domestic
Loves,

With furtive watch pursue her as she
moves;

The female with a meeker charm succeeds,
And her brown little ones around her
leads, 210

Nibbling the water lilies as they pass,
Or playing wanton with the floating
grass:

She in a mother's care, her beauty's pride
Forgets, unwear'd watching every side,
She calls them near, and with affection
sweet 215

Alternately relieves their weary feet;
Alternately¹ they mount her back, and
rest

Close by her mantling wings' embraces
prest.

Long may ye roam these hermit waves
that sleep,

In birch besprinkl'd cliffs embosom'd
deep; 220

These fairy holms untrodden, still, and
green,

Whose shades protect the hidden wave
serene;

Whence fragrance scents the water's
desert gale,

The violet, and the lily² of the vale;
Where, tho' her far-off twilight ditty
steal, 225

They not the trip of harmless milkmaid
feel.

Yon tuft conceals your home, your cottage
bow'r,

Fresh water rushes strew the verdant
floor;

Long grass and willows form the woven
wall,

And swings above the roof the poplar
tall. 230

Thence issuing oft, unwieldy as ye
stalk,

Ye crush with broad black feet your
flow'ry walk;

Safe from your door ye hear at breezy
morn,

The hound, the horse's tread, and mellow
horn;

¹ This is a fact of which I have been an eye-witness.

² The lily of the valley is found in great abundance
in the smaller islands of Wismar and Rügen.

At peace inverted your lithe necks ye
lave, 235

With the green bottom strewing o'er the
wave;

No ruder sound your desert haunts
invades,

Than waters dashing wild, or rocking
shades.

Ye ne'er, like hapless human wanderers,
throw

Your young on winter's winding sheet of
snow. 240

Fair swan! by all a mother's joys caress'd,
Haply some wretch has ey'd, and call'd
thee bless'd;

Who faint, and beat by summer's breath-
less ray,

Hath dragg'd her babes along this weary
way;

While arrowy fire extorting feverish
groans, 245

Shot stinging through her stark o'er-
labour'd bones.

—With backward gaze, lock'd joints, and
step of pain,

Her seat scarce left, she strives, alas! in
vain,

To teach their limbs along the burning
road

A few short steps to totter with their
load, 250

Shakes her numb arm that slumbers with
its weight,

And eyes through tears the mountain's
shadeless height;

And bids her soldier come her woes to
share,

Asleep on Bunker's charnel hill³ afar;
For hope's deserted well why wistful
look? 255

Chok'd is the pathway, and the pitcher
broke.

I see her now, deny'd to lay her head,
On cold blue nights, in hut or straw-built
shed;

Turn to a silent smile their sleepy cry,
By pointing to a shooting star on high:

I hear, while in the forest depth he sees,
The Moon's fix'd gaze between the open-
ing trees,

In broken sounds her elder grief demand,
And skyward lift, like one that prays, his
hand,

If, in that country, where he dwells
afar, 265

His father views that good, that kindly
star;

—Ah me! all light is mute amid the
gloom,

The interlunar cavern of the tomb.

³ Substituted in *Errata* for the words of the text:—
"Minden's charnel plain."—ED.

AN EVENING WALK

—When low-hung clouds each star of
 summer hide,
 And fireless are the valleys far and wide,
 Where the brook brawls along the painful
 road, ²⁷¹
 Dark with bat haunted ashes stretching
 broad,
 The distant clock forgot, and chilling dew,
 Pleas'd thro' the dusk their breaking
 smiles to view,
 Oft has she taught them on her lap to play
 Delighted, with the glow-worm's harm-
 less ray ²⁷⁶
 Toss'd light from hand to hand; while
 on the ground
 Small circles of green radiance gleam
 around.

Oh! when the bitter showers her path
 assail,
 And roars between the hills the torrent
 gale, ²⁸⁰
 —No more her breath can thaw their
 fingers cold,
 Their frozen arms her neck no more can
 fold;
 Scarce heard, their chattering lips her
 shoulder chill,
 And her cold back their colder bosoms
 thrill;
 All blind she wilders o'er the lightless
 heath, ²⁸⁵
 Led by Fear's cold wet hand, and dogg'd
 by Death;
 Death, as she turns her neck the kiss to
 seek,
 Breaks off the dreadful kiss with angry
 shriek.
 Snatch'd from her shoulder with despair-
 ing moan,
 She clasps them at that dim-seen roofless
 stone.— ²⁹⁰
 'Now ruthless Tempest launch thy dead-
 liest dart!
 Fall fires—but let us perish heart to heart.'
 Weak roof a cowering form two babes to
 shield,
 And faint the fire a dying heart can yield;
 Press the sad kiss, fond mother! vainly
 fears ²⁹⁵
 Thy flooded cheek to wet them with its
 tears;
 Soon shall the Light'ning hold before thy
 head
 His torch, and shew them slumbering in
 their bed,
 No tears can chill them, and no bosom
 warms,
 Thy breast their death-bed, coffin'd in
 thine arms. ³⁰⁰
 Sweet are the sounds that mingle from
 afar,
 Heard by calm lakes, as peeps the folding
 star,

Where the duck dabbles 'mid the rustling
 sedge,
 And feeding pike starts from the water's
 edge,
 Or the swan stirs the reeds, his neck and
 bill ³⁰⁵
 Wetting, that drip upon the water still;
 And heron, as resounds the trodden shore,
 Shoots upward, darting his long neck
 before.
 While, by the scene compos'd, the breast
 subsides,
 Nought wakens or disturbs it's tranquil
 tides; ³¹⁰
 Nought but the char that for the may-fly
 leaps,
 And breaks the mirror of the circling
 deeps;
 Or clock, that blind against the wanderer
 born,
 Drops at his feet, and stills his droning
 horn.
 —The whistling swain that plods his ring-
 ing way ³¹⁵
 Where the slow waggon winds along the
 bay;
 The sigh¹ of swallow flocks that twittering
 sweep,
 The solemn curfew swinging long and
 deep;
 The talking boat that moves with pensive
 sound,
 Or drops his anchor down with plunge
 profound; ³²⁰
 Of boys that bathe remote the faint
 uproar,
 And restless piper wearying out the shore;
 These all to swell the village murmurs
 blend,
 That soften'd from the water-head
 descend.
 While in sweet cadence rising small and
 still ³²⁵
 The far-off minstrels of the haunted hill,
 As the last bleating of the fold expires,
 Tune in the mountain dells their water
 lyres.

Now with religious awe the farewell light
 Blends with the solemn colouring of the
 night; ³³⁰
 'Mid groves of clouds that crest the
 mountain's brow,
 And round the West's proud lodge their
 shadows throw,
 Like Una² shining on her gloomy way,
 The half seen form of Twilight roams
 astray;

¹ 'Sugh', a Scotch word, expressive, as Mr. Gilpin explains it, of the sound of the motion of a stick through the air, or of the wind passing through the trees. See Burns' *Cotter's Saturday Night*.

² Alluding to this passage of Spenser—
 'Her angel face
 As the great eye of Heaven shined bright,
 And made a sunshine in that shady place.'

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Thence, from three paly loopholes mild
and small, ³³⁵
Slow lights upon the lake's still bosom
fall,
Beyond the mountain's giant reach that
hides
In deep determin'd gloom his subject
tides.
—'Mid the dark steeps repose the shadowy
streams,
As touch'd with dawning moonlight's
hoary gleams, ³⁴⁰
Long streaks of fairy light the wave
illumine
With bordering lines of intervening gloom,
Soft o'er the surface creep the lustres
pale
Tracking with silvering path the change-
ful gale.
—'Tis restless magic all; at once the
bright ³⁴⁵
Breaks on the shade, the shade upon the
light,
Fair Spirits are abroad; in sportive chase
Brushing with lucid wands the water's
face,
While music stealing round the glimmer-
ing deeps
Charms the tall circle of th' enchanted
steeps. ³⁵⁰
—As thro' th' astonish'd woods the notes
ascend,
The mountain streams their rising song
suspend;
Below Eve's listening Star the sheep walk
stills
It's drowsy tinklings on th' attentive
hills;
The milkmaid stops her ballad, and her
pail ³⁵⁵
Stays it's low murmur in th' unbreathing
vale;
No night-duck clamours for his wilder'd
mate,
Aw'd, while below the Genii hold their
state.
—The pomp is fled, and mute the won-
drous strains,
No wrack of all the pageant scene
remains, ³⁶⁰
So¹ vanish those fair Shadows, human
joys,
But Death alone their vain regret destroys.
Unheeded Night has overcome the vales,
On the dark earth the baffl'd vision fails,
If peep between the clouds a star on
high, ³⁶⁵
There turns for glad repose the weary
eye;
The latest lingerer of the forest train,
The lone black fir, forsakes the faded
plain;

¹ 'So break those glittering shadows, human joys,'
YOUNG.

Last evening sight, the cottage smoke no
more,
Lost in the deepen'd darkness, glimmers
hoar; ³⁷⁰
High towering from the sullen dark-
brown mere,
Like a black wall, the mountain steeps
appear,
Thence red from different heights with
restless gleam
Small cottage lights across the water
stream,
Nought else of man or life remains
behind ³⁷⁵
To call from other worlds the wilder'd
mind,
Till pours the wakeful bird her solemn
strains
Heard² by the night-calm of the wat'ry
plains.
—No purple prospects now the mind
employ
Glowing in golden sunset tints of joy, ³⁸⁰
But o'er the sooth'd accordant heart we
feel
A sympathetic twilight slowly steal,
And ever, as we fondly muse, we find
The soft gloom deep'ning on the tranquil
mind.
Stay! pensive, sadly-pleasing visions,
stay! ³⁸⁵
Ah no! as fades the vale, they fade away.
Yet still the tender, vacant gloom remains,
Still the cold cheek its shuddering tear
retains.
The bird, with fading light who ceas'd to
thread
Silent the hedge or steaming rivulet's
bed, ³⁹⁰
From his grey re-appearing tower shall
soon
Salute with boding note the rising moon,
Frosting with hoary light the pearly
ground,
And pouring deeper blue to Æther's
bound;
Rejoic'd her solemn pomp of clouds to
fold ³⁹⁵
In robes of azure, fleecy white, and
gold,
While rose and poppy, as the glow-worm
fades,
Cheequer with paler red the thicket
shades.
Now o'er the eastern hill, where Dark-
ness broods
O'er all its vanish'd dells, and lawns, and
woods ⁴⁰⁰
Where but a mass of shade the sight can
trace,
She lifts in silence up her lovely face;

² 'Charming the night-calm with her powerful
song.' A line of one of our older poets.

AN EVENING WALK

Above the gloomy valley flings her light,
Far to the western slopes with hamlets
white;
And gives, where woods the checquer'd
upland strew, 405
To the green corn of summer autumn's
hue.
Thus Hope, first pouring from her
blessed horn
Her dawn, far lovelier than the Moon's
own morn;
'Till higher mounted, strives in vain to
cheer
The weary hills, impervious, black'ning
near; 410
—Yet does she still, undaunted, throw the
while
On darling spots remote her tempting
smile.
—Ev'n now she decks for me a distant
scene,
(For dark and broad the gulph of time
between)
Gilding that cottage with her fondest ray,
(Sole bourn, sole wish, sole object of my
way; 416
How fair it's lawn and silvery woods
appear!
How sweet it's streamlet murmurs in
mine ear!)
Where we, my friend, to golden days
shall rise,
'Till our small share of hardly-paining sighs
(For sighs will ever trouble human breath)
Creep hush'd into the tranquil breast of
Death.
But now the clear-bright Moon her
zenith gains,
And rimy without speck extend the
plains;

The deepest dell the mountain's breast
displays, 425
Scarce hides a shadow from her searching
rays;
From the dark-blue 'faint silvery threads'
divide
The hills, while gleams below the azure
tide;
The scene is waken'd, yet its peace
unbroke,
By silver'd wreaths of quiet charcoal
smoke, 430
That, o'er the ruins of the fallen wood,
Steal down the hills, and spread along
the flood.
The song of mountain streams unheard by
day,
Now hardly heard, beguiles my home-
ward way.
All air is, as the sleeping water, still, 435
List'ning th' æreal music of the hill,
Broke only by the slow clock tolling
deep,
Or shout that wakes the ferry-man from
sleep,
Soon follow'd by his hollow-parting oar,
And echo'd hoof approaching the far
shore; 440
Sound of clos'd gate, across the water
born,
Hurrying the feeding hare thro' rustling
corn;
The tremulous sob of the complaining
owl;
And at long intervals the mill-dog's
howl;
The distant forge's swinging thump
profound; 445
Or yell in the deep woods of lonely
hound.

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES

REPRINTED FROM THE QUARTO OF 1793

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES. IN VERSE. TAKEN DURING A PEDESTRIAN TOUR IN THE ITALIAN, GRISON, SWISS, AND SAVOYARD ALPS. BY W. WORDSWORTH, B.A., OF ST. JOHN'S, CAMBRIDGE. 'LOCA PASTORUM DESERTA ATQUE OTIA DIA.'—*Lucret.* 'CASTELLA IN TUMULIS—ET LONGE SALTUS LATEQUE VACANTES.'—*Virgil.* LONDON: PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD. 1793.

TO THE REV. ROBERT JONES, FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

DEAR SIR,—However desirous I might have been of giving you proofs of the high place you hold in my esteem, I should have been cautious of wounding your delicacy by thus publicly addressing you, had not the circumstance of my having accompanied you amongst the Alps, seemed to give this dedication a propriety sufficient to do away any scruples which your modesty might otherwise have suggested.

In inscribing this little work to you I consult my heart. You know well how great is the difference between two companions lolling in a post chaise, and two travellers plodding slowly along the road, side by side, each with his little knapsack of necessities upon his shoulders. How much more of heart between the two latter!

I am happy in being conscious I shall have one reader who will approach the conclusion of these few pages with regret. You they must certainly interest, in reminding you of moments to which you

APPENDIX: POEMS OF 1793

can hardly look back without a pleasure not the less dear from a shade of melancholy. You will meet with few images without recollecting the spot where we observed them together, consequently, whatever is feeble in my design, or spiritless in my colouring, will be amply supplied by your own memory.

With still greater propriety I might have inscribed to you a description of some of the features of your native mountains, through which we have wandered together, in the same manner, with so much pleasure. But the sea-sunsets which give such splendour to the vale of Clwyd, Snowdon, the chair of Idris, the quiet village of Bethkelet, Menai and her druids, the Alpine steep of the Conway, and the still more interesting windings of the wizard stream of the Dee remain yet untouched. Apprehensive that my pencil may never be exercised on these subjects, I cannot let slip this opportunity of thus publicly assuring you with how much affection and esteem, I am, Dear Sir, Your most obedient very humble servant. W. WORDSWORTH.

ARGUMENT

Happiness (if she had been to be found on Earth) amongst the Charms of Nature.—Pleasures of the pedestrian Traveller.—Author crosses France to the Alps.—Present state of the Grande Chartreuse.—Lake of Como.—Time, Sunset.—Same Scene, Twilight.—Same Scene, Morning, it's Voluptuous Character; Old Man and Forest Cottage Music.—River Tusa.—Via Mala and Grison Gypsy.—Valley of Schellenenthal.—Lake of Uri.—Stormy Sunset.—Chapel of William Tell.—Force of Local Emotion.—Chamois Chaser.—View of the higher Alps.—Manner of Life of a Swiss Mountaineer interspersed with Views of the higher Alps.—Golden Age of the Alps.—Life and Views continued.—Ranz des Vaches, famous Swiss Air.—Abbey of Einsiedlen and it's Pilgrims.—Valley of Chamouny.—Mont Blanc.—Slavery of Savoy.—Influence of Liberty on Cottage Happiness.—France.—Wish for the Extirpation of Slavery.—Conclusion.

WERE there, below, a spot of holy ground,
By Pain and her sad family unfound,
Sure, Nature's GOD that spot to man had
giv'n,
Where murmuring rivers join the song of
ev'n;
Where falls the purple morning far and
wide
In flakes of light upon the mountain-
side;
Where summer Suns in ocean sink to
rest,
Or moonlight Upland lifts her hoary
breast;
Where Silence, on her night of wing, o'er-
broods
Unfathom'd dells and undiscover'd
woods;
Where rocks and groves the power of
waters shakes
In cataracts, or sleeps in quiet lakes.
But doubly pitying Nature loves to show'r
Soft on his wounded heart her healing
pow'r,
Who plods o'er hills and vales his road
forlorn,
Wooing her varying charms from eve to
morn.
No sad vacuities his heart annoy,
Blows not a Zephyr but it whispers
joy;
For him lost flowers their idle sweets
exhale;
He tastes the meanest note that swells
the gale;
For him sod-seats the cottage-door adorn,
And peeps the far-off spire, his evening
bourn!
Dear is the forest frowning o'er his head,
And dear the green-sward to his velvet
tread;
Moves there a cloud o'er mid-day's
flaming eye?

Upward he looks—and calls it luxury;
Kind Nature's charities his steps attend,
In every babbling brook he finds a friend,
While chaste thoughts of sweetest
use, bestow'd
By Wisdom, moralize his pensive road.
Host of his welcome inn, the noon-tide
bow'r,
To his spare meal he calls the passing
poor;
He views the Sun uprear his golden fire,
Or sink, with heart alive like Memnon's¹
lyre;
Blesses the Moon that comes with kindest
ray
To light him shaken by his viewless way.
With bashful fear no cottage children
steal
From him, a brother at the cottage meal,
His humble looks no shy restraint im-
part,
Around him plays at will the virgin heart.
While unsuspended wheels the village
dance,
The maidens eye him with inquiring
glance,
Much wondering what sad stroke of
crazing Care
Or desperate Love could lead a wanderer
there.
Me, lur'd by hope her sorrows to
remove,
A heart, that could not much itself ap-
prove,
O'er Gallia's wastes of corn dejected led,
Her² road elms rustling thin above my
head,

¹ The lyre of Memnon is reported to have emitted melancholy or cheerful tones, as it was touched by the sun's evening or morning rays.

² There are few people whom it may be necessary to inform, that the sides of many of the post-roads in France are planted with a row of trees.

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES

Or through her truant pathway's native charms,
 By secret villages and lonely farms, 50
 To where the Alps, ascending white in air,
 Toy with the Sun, and glitter from afar.
 Ev'n now I sigh at hoary Chartreuse'¹
 doom
 Weeping beneath his chill of mountain gloom.
 Where now is fled that Power whose frown severe
 Tam'd 'sober Reason' till she crouch'd 55
 in fear?
 That breath'd a death-like peace these woods around,
 Broke only by th' unvaried torrent's sound,
 Or prayer-bell by the dull cicada drown'd.
 The cloister startles at the gleam of arms,
 And Blasphemy the shuddering fane alarms; 61
 Nod the cloud-piercing pines their troubl'd heads,
 Spires, rocks, and lawns, a browner night o'erspreads.
 Strong terror checks the female peasant's sighs,
 And start th' astonish'd shades at female eyes. 65
 The thundering tube the aged angler hears,
 And swells the groaning torrent with his tears.
 From Bruno's forest screams the frightened jay,
 And slow th' insulted eagle wheels away.
 The cross with hideous laughter Demons mock, 70
 By angels' planted on the æreal rock.
 The 'parting Genius' sighs with hollow breath
 Along the mystic streams of Life and Death,²
 Swelling the outcry dull, that long resounds
 Portentous, thro' her old woods' trackless bounds, 75
 Deepening her echoing torrents' awful peal
 And bidding paler shades her form conceal,
 Vallombre,³ 'mid her falling fanes, deplores,
 For ever broke, the sabbath of her bow'rs.
 More pleas'd, my foot the hidden margin roves 80
 Of Como bosom'd deep in chestnut groves.

No meadows thrown between, the giddy steeps
 Tower, bare or silvan, from the narrow deeps.
 To towns, whose shades of no rude sound complain,
 To ringing team unknown and grating wain, 85
 To flat-roof'd towns, that touch the water's bound,
 Or lurk in woody sunless glens profound,
 Or from the bending rocks obtrusive cling,
 And o'er the whiten'd wave their shadows fling;
 Wild round the steep the little⁴ pathway twines, 90
 And Silence loves it's purple roof of vines.
 The viewless lingerer hence, at evening, sees
 From rock-hewn steps the sail between the trees;
 Or marks, mid opening cliffs, fair dark-ey'd maids
 Tend the small harvest of their garden glades, 95
 Or, led by distant warbling notes, surveys,
 With hollow ringing ears and darkening gaze,
 Binding the charmed soul in powerless trance,
 Lip-dewing Song and ringlet-tossing Dance,
 Where sparkling eyes and breaking smiles illumine 100
 The bosom'd cabin's lyre-enliven'd gloom;
 Or stops the solemn mountain-shades to view
 Stretch, o'er their pictur'd mirror, broad and blue,
 Tracking the yellow sun from steep to steep,
 As up th' opposing hills, with tortoise foot, they creep. 105
 Here half a village shines, in gold array'd,
 Bright as the moon, half hides itself in shade.
 From the dark sylvan roofs the restless spire,
 Inconstant glancing, mounts like springing fire, 109
 There, all unshaded, blazing forests throw
 Rich golden verdure on the waves below.
 Slow glides the sail along th' illumined shore,
 And steals into the shade the lazy oar.

¹ Alluding to crosses seen on the tops of the spire rocks of the Chartreuse, which have every appearance of being inaccessible.

² Names of rivers at the Chartreuse.

³ Name of one of the valleys of the Chartreuse.

⁴ If any of my readers should ever visit the Lake of Como, I recommend it to him to take a stroll along this charming little pathway; he must chuse the evening, as it is on the western side of the lake. We pursued it from the foot of the water to its head: it is once interrupted by a ferry.

APPENDIX : POEMS OF 1793

Soft bosoms breathe around contagious
 sighs,
 And amorous music on the water dies.
 Heedless how Pliny, musing here, survey'd
 Old Roman boats and figures thro' the shade,
 Pale Passion, overpower'd, retires and woos
 The thicket, where th' unlisten'd stock-dove coos.
 How bless'd, delicious Scene! the eye that greets ¹²⁰
 Thy open beauties, or thy lone retreats;
 Th' unwearied sweep of wood thy cliffs that scales,
 The never-ending waters of thy vales;
 The cots, those dim religious groves embow'r,
 Or, under rocks that from the water tow'r insinuated, sprinkling all the shore, ¹²⁶
 Each with his household boat beside the door,
 Whose flaccid sails in forms fantastic droop,
 Bright'ning the gloom where thick the forests stoop;
 —Thy torrents shooting from the clear-blue sky, ¹³⁰
 Thy towns, like swallows' nests that cleave on high;
 That glimmer hoar in eve's last light, descry'd
 Dim from the twilight water's shaggy side,
 Whence lutes and voices down th' enchanted woods
 Steal, and compose the oar-forgotten floods, ¹³⁵
 While Evening's solemn bird melodious weeps,
 Heard, by star-spotted bays, beneath the steeps;
 —Thy lake, mid smoking woods, that blue and grey
 Gleams, streak'd or dappled, hid from morning's ray
 Slow-travelling down the western hills, to fold ¹⁴⁰
 It's green-ting'd margin in a blaze of gold;
 From thickly-glittering spires the matin-bell
 Calling the woodman from his desert cell,
 A summons to the sound of oars, that pass,
 Spotting the steaming deeps, to early mass; ¹⁴⁵
 Slow swells the service o'er the water born,
 While fill each pause the ringing woods of morn.
 Farewell! those forms that, in thy noon-tide shade,
 Rest, near their little plots of wheaten glade;

Those steadfast eyes, that beating breasts inspire ¹⁵⁰
 To throw the 'sultry ray' of young Desire;
 Those lips, whose tides of fragrance come, and go,
 Accordant to the cheek's unquiet glow;
 Those shadowy breasts in love's soft light array'd,
 And rising, by the moon of passion sway'd. ¹⁵⁵
 —Thy fragrant gales and lute-resounding streams,
 Breathe o'er the failing soul voluptuous dreams;
 While Slavery, forcing the sunk mind to dwell
 On joys that might disgrace the captive's cell,
 Her shameless timbrel shakes along thy marge, ¹⁶⁰
 And winds between thine isles the vocal barge.
 Yet, arts are thine that rock th' un-sleeping heart,
 And smiles to Solitude and Want impart.
 I lov'd, mid thy most desert woods astray,
 With pensive step to measure my slow way, ¹⁶⁵
 By lonely, silent cottage-doors to roam,
 The far-off peasant's day-deserted home;
 Once did I pierce to where a cabin stood,
 The redbreast peace had bury'd it in wood,
 There, by the door a hoary-headed sire
 Touch'd with his wither'd hand an aged lyre; ¹⁷¹
 Beneath an old-grey oak as violets lie,
 Stretch'd at his feet with steadfast, upward eye,
 His children's children join'd the holy sound,
 A hermit—with his family around. ¹⁷⁵
 Hence shall we seek where fair Locarno smiles
 Embower'd in walnut slopes and citron isles,
 Or charms that smile on Tusa's evening stream,
 While mid dim towers and woods her^s waters gleam:
 From the bright wave, in solemn gloom, retire ¹⁸⁰
 The dull-red steeps, and darkening still, aspire,
 To where afar rich orange lustrous glow
 Round undistinguish'd clouds, and rocks, and snow;

1 'Solo, e pensoso i più deserti campi
 Vò misurando à passi tardi, e lenti.'—

PETRARCH.

2 The river along whose banks you descend in crossing the Alps by the Semplon pass. From the striking contrast of it's features, this pass I should imagine to be the most interesting among the Alps.

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Or, led where Viamala's chasms confine
 Th' indignant waters of the infant Rhine,
 Bend o'er th' abyss?—the else impervious
 gloom¹⁸⁶
 His burning eyes with fearful light
 illumine.
 The Grison gypsey here her tent has
 plac'd,
 Sole human tenant of the piny waste;
 Her tawny skin, dark eyes, and glossy
 locks,¹⁹⁰
 Bend o'er the smoke that curls beneath
 the rocks.
 —The mind condemn'd, without reprieve,
 to go
 O'er life's long deserts with it's charge of
 woe,
 With sad congratulation joins the
 train,
 Where beasts and men together o'er
 the plain¹⁹⁵
 Move on,—a mighty caravan of
 pain;
 Hope, strength, and courage, social suffer-
 ing brings,
 Freshening the waste of sand with shades
 and springs.
 —She solitary through the desert drear
 Spontaneous wanders, hand in hand with
 Fear.²⁰⁰
 A giant moan along the forest swells
 Protracted, and the twilight storm fore-
 tells,
 And, ruining from the cliffs their deafen-
 ing load
 Tumbles, the wildering Thunder slips
 abroad;
 On the high summits Darkness comes
 and goes,²⁰⁵
 Hiding their fiery clouds, their rocks, and
 snows;
 The torrent, travers'd by the lustre broad,
 Starts like a horse beside the flashing road;
 In the roof'd¹ bridge, at that despairing
 hour,
 She seeks a shelter from the battering
 show'r.²¹⁰
 —Fierce comes the river down; the crash-
 ing wood
 Gives way, and half it's pines torment
 the flood;
 Fearful,² beneath, the Water-spirits call,
 And the bridge vibrates, tottering to its
 fall.
 —Heavy, and dull, and cloudy is the
 night,²¹⁵
 No star supplies the comfort of it's light,

¹ Most of the bridges among the Alps are of wood and covered: these bridges have a heavy appearance, and rather injure the effect of the scenery in some places.

² Red came the river down, and loud, and oft
 The angry Spirit of the water shriek'd.
 HOME'S *Douglas*.

Glimmer the dim-lit Alps, dilated, round,
 And one sole light shifts in the vale pro-
 found;
 While, opposite, the waning moon hangs
 still,
 And red, above her melancholy hill,²²⁰
 By the deep quiet gloom appall'd, she
 sighs,
 Stoops her sick head, and shuts her weary
 eyes.
 —Breaking th' ascending roar of desert
 floods,
 And insect buzz, that stuns the sultry
 woods,
 She hears, upon the mountain forest's
 brow,²²⁵
 The death-dog, howling loud and long,
 On viewless fingers counts the valley-
 clock,
 Followed by drowsy crow of midnight
 cock.
 —Bursts from the troubl'd Larch's giant
 boughs
 The pie, and chattering breaks the night's
 repose.²³⁰
 Low barks the fox: by Havoc rouz'd the
 bear,
 Quits, growling, the white bones that
 strew his lair;
 The dry leaves stir as with the serpent's
 walk,
 And, far beneath, Banditti voices talk;
 Behind her hill the Moon, all crimson,
 rides,²³⁵
 And his red eyes the slinking water hides;
 Then all is hushed; the bushes rustle near,
 And with strange tinglings sings her
 fainting ear.
 —Vex'd by the darkness, from the piny
 gulf
 Ascending, nearer howls the famish'd
 wolf.²⁴⁰
 While thro' the stillness scatters wild
 dismay,
 Her babe's small cry, that leads him to
 his prey.
 Now, passing Urseren's open vale
 serene,
 Her quiet streams, and hills of downy
 green,
 Plunge with the Russ embrown'd by
 Terror's breath,²⁴⁵
 Where danger roofs the narrow walks of
 death;
 By floods, that, thundering from their
 dizzy height,
 Swell more gigantic on the steadfast sight;
 Black drizzling craggs, that beaten by
 the din,
 Vibrate, as if a voice complain'd within;
 Bare steeps, where Desolation stalks,
 afraid,²⁵¹
 Unsteadfast, by a blasted yew upstay'd;

APPENDIX: POEMS OF 1793

By cells¹ whose image, trembling as he
prays,
Awe struck, the kneeling peasant scarce
surveys;
Loose-hanging rocks the Day's bless'd
eye that hide, 255
And crosses² rear'd to Death on every
side,
Which with cold kiss Devotion planted
near,
And, bending, water'd with the human
tear,
Soon fading 'silent' from her upward
eye,
Unmov'd with each rude form of Danger
nigh, 260
Fix'd on the anchor left by him who saves
Alike in whelming snows and roaring
waves.

On as we move, a softer prospect opes,
Calm huts, and lawns between, and sylvan
slopes.
While mists, suspended on th' expiring
gale, 265
Moveless o'er-hang the deep secluded
vale,
The beams of evening, slipping soft
between,
Light up of tranquil joy a sober scene;
Winding it's dark-green wood and
emerald glade,
The still vale lengthens underneath the
shade; 270
While in soft gloom the scattering bowers
recede,
Green dewy lights adorn the freshen'd
mead,
Where solitary forms illumin'd stray
Turning with quiet touch the valley's
hay,
On the low³ brown wood-huts delighted
sleep 275
Along the brighten'd gloom reposing
deep.
While pastoral pipes and streams the
landscape lull,
And bells of passing mules that tinkle
dull,
In solemn shapes before th' admiring eye
Dilated hang the misty pines on high,
Huge convent domes with pinnacles and
tow'rs, 281
And antique castles seen thro' drizzling
show'rs.
From such romantic dreams my soul
awake,

¹ The Catholic religion prevails here. These cells are, as is well known, very common in the Catholic countries, planted, like Roman tombs, along the road side.

² Crosses commemorative of the deaths of travellers by the fall of snow, and other accidents very common along this dreadful road.

³ The houses in the more retired Swiss valleys are all built of wood.

Lo! Fear looks silent down on Uri's lake,
By whose unpathway'd margin still and
dread 285
Was never heard the plodding peasant's
tread.
Tower like a wall the naked rocks, or
reach
Far o'er the secret water dark with beach,
More high, to where creation seems to
end,
Shade above shade the desert pines
ascend, 290
And still, below, where mid the savage
scene
Peeps out a little speck of smiling green,
There with his infants man undaunted
creeps
And hangs his small wood-hut upon the
steeps.
A garden-plot the desert air perfumes,
'Mid the dark pines a little orchard
blooms, 296
A zig-zag path from the domestic skiff
Threading the painful cragg surmounts
the cliff.
—Before those hermit doors, that never
know 299
The face of traveller passing to and fro,
No peasant leans upon his pole, to tell
For whom at morning toll'd the funeral
bell,
Their watch-dog ne'er his angry bark for-
goes,
Touch'd by the beggar's moan of human
woes,
The grassy seat beneath their casement
shade 305
The pilgrim's wistful eye hath never
stay'd.
—There, did the iron Genius not disdain
The gentle Power that haunts the myrtle
plain,
There might the love-sick maiden sit, and
chide
Th' insuperable rocks and severing tide,
There watch at eve her lover's sun-gilt
sail 311
Approaching, and upbraid the tardy gale,
There list at midnight till is heard no
more,
Below, the echo of his parting oar,
There hang in fear, when growls the
frozen stream, 315
To guide his dangerous tread the taper's
gleam.
'Mid stormy vapours ever driving by,
Where ospreys, cormorants, and herons
cry,
Where hardly giv'n the hopeless waste to
cheer
Deny'd the bread of life the foodful ear,
Dwindles the pear on autumn's latest
spray, 321
And apple sickens pale in summer's ray,

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES

Ev'n here Content has fix'd her smiling
reign

With Independence child of high Disdain.
Exulting mid the winter of the skies,
Shy as the jealous chamois, Freedom
flies,

And often grasps her sword, and often
eyes,

Her crest a bough of Winter's bleakest
pine,

Strange 'weeds' and alpine plants her
helm entwine,

And wildly-pausing oft she hangs aghast,
While thrills the 'Spartan life' between
the blast.

'Tis storm; and hid in mist from hour
to hour

All day the floods a deeper murmur
pour,

And mournful sounds, as of a Spirit
lost,

Pipe wild along the hollow-blustering
coast,

'Till the Sun walking on his western
field

Shakes from behind the clouds his flash-
ing shield.

Triumphant on the bosom of the storm,
Glances the fire-clad eagle's wheeling
form;

Eastward, in long perspective glittering,
shine

The wood-crown'd cliffs that o'er the lake
recline;

Wide o'er the Alps a hundred streams
unfold,

At once to pillars turn'd that flame with
gold;

Behind his sail the peasant strives to
shun

The west that burns like one dilated sun,
Where in a mighty crucible expire

The mountains, glowing hot, like coals of
fire¹.

But lo! the boatman, over-aw'd, before
The pictur'd fane of Tell suspends his oar;

Confused the Marathonian tale appears,
While burn in his full eyes the glorious
tears.

¹ I had once given to these sketches the title of
Picturesque; but the Alps are insulted in applying to
them that term. Whoever, in attempting to describe
their sublime features, should confine himself to the
cold rules of painting would give his reader but a
very imperfect idea of those emotions which they
have the irresistible power of communicating to
the most impassive imaginations. The fact is, that con-
trouling influence, which distinguishes the Alps from
all other scenery, is derived from images which dis-
dain the pencil. Had I wished to make a picture of
this scene I had thrown much less light into it. But
I consulted nature and my feelings. The ideas
excited by the stormy sunset I am here describing
owed their sublimity to that deluge of light, or rather
of fire, in which nature had wrapped the immense
forms around me; any intrusion of shade, by destroy-
ing the unity of the impression, had necessarily
diminished it's grandeur.

And who but feels a power of strong con-
troul,

Felt only there, oppress his labouring
soul,

Who walks, where honour'd men of
ancient days

Have wrought with god-like arm the
deeds of praise?

Say, who, by thinking on Canadian hills,
Or wild Aosta lull'd by Alpine rills,

On Zutphen's plain; or where with
soften'd gaze

The old grey stones the plaided chief
surveys,

Can guess the high resolve, the cherish'd
pain

Of him whom passion rivets to the plain,
Where breath'd the gale that caught

Wolfe's happiest sigh,
And the last sun-beam fell on Bayard's
eye,

Where bleeding Sydney from the cup
retir'd,

And glad Dundee in 'faint huzzas'
expir'd.

But now with other soul I stand alone
Sublime upon this far-surveying cone,

And watch from pike² to pike amid the
sky

Small as a bird the chamois-chaser fly.
'Tis his with fearless step at large to roam

Thro' wastes, of Spirits wing'd the solemn
home,

Thro'³ vacant worlds where Nature never
gave

A brook to murmur or a bough to wave,
Which unsubstantial Phantoms sacred
keep;

Thro' worlds where Life and Sound, and
Motion sleep,

Where Silence still her death-like reign
extends,

Save when the startling cliff unfrequent
rends:

In the deep snow the mighty ruin drown'd,
Mocks the dull ear of Time with deaf

abortive sound;
—To mark a planet's pomp and steady
light

In the least star of scarce-appearing night,
And neighbouring moon, that coasts the
vast profound,

Wheel pale and silent her diminish'd round,
While far and wide the icy summits blaze

Rejoicing in the glory of her rays; ³⁸⁵
The star of noon that glitters small and
bright,

Shorn of his beams, insufferably white,

² Pike is a word very commonly used in the north
of England, to signify a high mountain of the conic
form, as Langdale pike, &c.

³ For most of the images in the next sixteen verses
I am indebted to M. Raymond's interesting observa-
tions annexed to his translation of Coxe's Tour in
Switzerland.

APPENDIX: POEMS OF 1793

And flying fleet behind his orb to view
Th' interminable sea of sable blue.
—Of cloudless suns no more ye frost-
built spires ³⁹⁰
Refract in rainbow hues the restless fires!
Ye dewy mists the arid rocks o'er-spread
Whose slippery face derides his deathful
tread!
—To wet the peak's impracticable sides
He opens of his feet the sanguine tides,
Weak and more weak the issuing current
eyes ³⁹⁶
Lapp'd by the panting tongue of thirsty
skies.¹
—At once bewildering mists around him
close,
And cold and hunger are his least of
woes; ³⁹⁹
The Demon of the snow with angry roar
Descending, shuts for aye his prison door.
Craz'd by the strength of hope at morn
he eyes
As sent from heav'n the raven of the skies,
Then with despair's whole weight his
spirits sink,
No bread to feed him, and the snow his
drink, ⁴⁰⁵
While ere his eyes can close upon the
day,
The eagle of the Alps o'er-shades his prey.
—Meanwhile his wife and child with
cruel hope
All night the door at every moment ope;
Haply that child in fearful doubt may
gaze, ⁴¹⁰
Passing his father's bones in future days,
Start at the reliques of that very thigh,
On which so oft he prattled when a boy.
Hence shall we turn where, heard with
fear afar,
Thunders thro' echoing pines the head-
long Aar? ⁴¹⁵
Or rather stay to taste the mild delights
Of pensive Underwalden's² pastoral
heights?
—Is there who mid these awful wilds
has seen
The native Genii walk the mountain
green?
Or heard, while other worlds their
charms reveal, ⁴²⁰
Soft music from th' æreal summit steal?
While o'er the desert, answering every
close,
Rich steam of sweetest perfume comes
and goes.

—And sure there is a secret Power that
reigns
Here, where no trace of man the spot
profanes, ⁴²⁵
Nought but the herds that pasturing
upward creep,
Hung dim-discover'd from the dangerous
steep,
Or summer hamlet,³ flat and bare, on high
Suspended, mid the quiet of the sky. ⁴²⁹
How still! no irreligious sound or sight
Rouzes the soul from her severe delight.
An idle voice the sabbath region fills
Of Deep that calls to Deep across the hills,
Broke only by the melancholy sound
Of drowsy bells for ever tinkling round;
Faint wail of eagle melting into blue ⁴³⁶
Beneath the cliffs, and pine-woods steady
sugh;⁴
The solitary heifer's deepen'd low;
Or rumbling heard remote of falling snow.
Save that, the stranger seen below, the
boy ⁴⁴⁰
Shouts from the echoing hills with savage
joy.
When warm from myrtle bays and
tranquil seas,
Comes on, to whisper hope, the vernal
breeze,⁵
When hums the mountain bee in May's
glad ear,
And emerald isles to spot the heights
appear, ⁴⁴⁵
When shouts and lowing herds the valley
fill,
And louder torrents stun the noon-tide
hill,
When fragrant scents beneath th' en-
chanted tread
Spring up, his little all around him spread,
The pastoral Swiss begins the cliffs to
scale, ⁴⁵⁰
To silence leaving the deserted vale,
Up the green mountain tracking Sum-
mer's feet,
Each twilight earlier call'd the Sun to
meet,
With earlier smile the ray of morn to view
Fall on his shifting hut that gleams mid
smoking dew; ⁴⁵⁵
Bless'd with his herds, as in the patriarch's
age,
The summer long to feed from stage to
stage;
O'er azure pikes serene and still, they go,
And hear the rattling thunder far below;

¹ The rays of the sun drying the rocks frequently produce on their surface a dust so subtle and slippery, that the wretched chamois-chasers are obliged to bleed themselves in the legs and feet in order to secure a footing.

² The people of this Canton are supposed to be of a more melancholy disposition than the other inhabitants of the Alps: this, if true, may proceed from their living more secluded.

³ These summer hamlets are most probably (as I have seen observed by a critic in the *Gentleman's Magazine*) what Virgil alludes to in the expression 'Castella in tumulis'.

⁴ Sugh, a Scotch word expressive of the sound of the wind through the trees.

⁵ This wind, which announces the spring to the Swiss, is called in their language FOEN; and is according to M. Raymond the Syroco of the Italians.

Or lost at eve in sudden mist the day 460
Attend, or dare with minute-steps their
way;
Hang from the rocks that tremble o'er
the steep,
And tempt the icy valley yawning deep,
O'er-walk the chasmy torrent's foam-lit
bed,
Rock'd on the dizzy larch's narrow tread,
Whence Danger leans, and pointing
ghastly, joys 466
To mock the mind with 'desperation's
toys';
Or steal beneath loose mountains, half-
deterr'd,
That sigh and shudder to the lowing
herd,
—I see him, up the midway cliff he creeps
Where a scanty knot of verdure
peeps,
Hence down the steep a pile of grass he
throws
The fodder of his herds in winter snows.
A different life to what tradition hoar
transmits of days more bless'd in times
of yore.¹ 475
When Summer lengthen'd out his season
bland,
And with rock-honey flow'd the happy
land.
Continual fountains welling cheer'd the
waste,
And plants were wholesome, now of
deadly taste.
For Winter yet his frozen stores had
pil'd 480
Jusping where the fairest herbage
smil'd;
For Hunger forc'd the herbs from
pastures bare
For scanty food the treacherous cliffs to
dare.
When the milk-thistle bad those herds
demand
Three times a day the pail and welcome
hand. 485
But human vices have provok'd the rod
Of angry Nature to avenge her God.
Thus does the father to his sons relate,
On the lone mountain top, their chang'd
estate. 489
Still, Nature, ever just, to him imparts
Oys only given to uncorrupted hearts.
—'Tis morn: with gold the verdant
mountain glows,

¹ This tradition of the golden age of the Alps, as A. Raymond observes, is highly interesting, interesting not less to the philosopher than to the poet. Here I cannot help remarking, that the superstitions of the Alps appear to be far from possessing that poetical character which so eminently distinguishes those of Scotland and the other mountainous northern countries. The Devil with his horns, &c., seems to be, in their idea, the principal agent that rings about the sublime natural revolutions that take place daily before their eyes.

More high, the snowy peaks with hues of
rose.
Far stretch'd beneath the many-tinted
hills,
A mighty waste of mist the valley fills,
A solemn sea! whose vales and mountains
round 496
Stand motionless, to awful silence bound.
A gulf of gloomy blue, that opens wide
And bottomless, divides the midway tide.
Like leaning masts of stranded ships
appear 500
The pines that near the coast their sum-
mits rear
Of cabins, woods, and lawns a pleasant
shore
Bounds calm and clear the chaos still
and hoar;
Loud thro' that midway gulf ascending,
sound
Unnumber'd streams with hollow roar
profound. 505
Mounts thro' the nearer mist the chaunt
of birds,
And talking voices, and the low of herds,
The bark of dogs, the drowsy tinkling bell,
And wild-wood mountain lutes of saddest
swell.
Think not, suspended from the cliff on
high 510
He looks below with undelighted eye.
—No vulgar joy is his, at even tide
Stretch'd on the scented mountain's
purple side.
For as the pleasures of his simple day
Beyond his native valley hardly stray, 515
Nought round it's darling precincts can
he find
But brings some past enjoyment to his
mind,
While Hope that ceaseless leans on
Pleasure's urn
Binds her wild wreathes, and whispers
his return.
Once Man entirely free, alone and
wild, 520
Was bless'd as free—for he was Nature's
child.
He, all superior but his God disdain'd,
Walk'd none restraining, and by none
restrain'd,
Confess'd no law but what his reason
taught,
Did all he wish'd, and wish'd but what he
ought. 525
As Man in his primæval dower array'd
The image of his glorious sire display'd,
Ev'n so, by vestal Nature guarded, here
The traces of primæval Man appear.
The native dignity no forms debase, 530
The eye-sublime, and surly lion-grace.
The slave of none, of beasts alone the lord,
He marches with his flute, his book, and
sword,

APPENDIX: POEMS OF 1793

Well taught by that to feel his rights,
 prepar'd
 With this 'the blessings he enjoys to
 guard.'⁵³⁵
 And as on glorious ground he draws his
 breath,
 Where Freedom oft, with Victory and
 Death,
 Hath seen in grim array amid their
 Storms
 Mixed with auxiliar Rocks, three hundred
 Forms;¹
 While twice ten thousand corselets at the
 view⁵⁴⁰
 Dropp'd loud at once, Oppression
 shriek'd, and flew.
 Oft as those sainted Rocks before him
 spread,
 An unknown power connects him with
 the dead.
 For images of other worlds are there,
 Awful the light, and holy is the air.⁵⁴⁵
 Uncertain thro' his fierce uncultur'd soul
 Like lighted tempests troubled transports
 roll;
 To viewless realms his Spirit towers
 amain,
 Beyond the senses and their little reign.
 And oft, when pass'd that solemn vision
 by,⁵⁵⁰
 He holds with God himself communion
 high,
 When the dread peal of swelling torrents
 fills
 The sky-roof'd temple of the eternal hills,
 And savage Nature humbly joins the
 rite,
 While flash her upward eyes severe
 delight.⁵⁵⁵
 Or gazing from the mountain's silent
 brow,
 Bright stars of ice and azure worlds of
 snow,
 Where needle peaks of granite shooting
 bare
 Tremble in ever-varying tints of air,
 Great joy by horror tam'd dilates his
 heart,⁵⁶⁰
 And the near heav'ns their own delights
 impart.
 —When the Sun bids the gorgeous scene
 farewell,
 Alps overlooking Alps their state up-
 swell;

¹ Alluding to several battles which the Swiss in very small numbers have gained over their oppressors, the house of Austria; and in particular, to one fought at Naefels near Glarus, where three hundred and thirty men defeated an army of between fifteen and twenty thousand Austrians. Scattered over the valley are to be found eleven stones, with this inscription 1388, the year the battle was fought, marking out as I was told upon the spot, the several places where the Austrians attempting to make a stand were repulsed anew.

Huge Pikes of Darkness named, of Fear¹
 and Storms,
 Lift, all serene, their still, illumina'd
 forms,⁵⁶⁵
 In sea-like reach of prospect round him
 spread,
 Ting'd like an angel's smile all rosy red.
 When downward to his winter hut he
 goes,
 Dear and more dear the lessening circle
 grows,
 The hut which from the hills his eyes
 employs⁵⁷⁰
 So oft, the central point of all his joys.
 And as a swift by tender cares oppress'd
 Peeps often ere she dart into her nest,
 So to th' untrodden floor, where round
 him looks
 His father helpless as the babe he rocks,
 Oft he descends to nurse the brother
 pair,⁵⁷⁶
 Till storm and driving ice blockade him
 there;
 There hears, protected by the woods
 behind,
 Secure, the chiding of the baffled wind,
 Hears Winter, calling all his Terrors
 round,⁵⁸⁰
 Rush down the living rocks with whirl-
 wind sound.
 Thro' Nature's vale his homely pleasures
 glide
 Unstain'd by envy, discontent, and pride,
 The bound of all his vanity to deck
 With one bright bell a favourite heifer's
 neck;⁵⁸⁵
 Content upon some simple annual feast,
 Remember'd half the year, and hop'd the
 rest,
 If dairy produce, from his inner hoard,
 Of thrice ten summers consecrate the
 board.
 —Alas! in every clime a flying ray⁵⁹⁰
 Is all we have to cheer our wintry way,
 Condemn'd, in mists and tempests ever
 rife,
 To pant slow up the endless Alp of life.
 'Here,' cried a swain, whose venerable
 head
 Bloom'd with the snow-drops of Man's
 narrow bed,⁵⁹⁵
 Last night, while by his dying fire, as
 clos'd
 The day, in luxury my limbs repos'd,
 'Here Penury oft from misery's mount
 will guide
 Ev'n to the summer door his icy tide,
 And here the avalanche of Death destroy
 The little cottage of domestic Joy. 601
 But, ah! th' unwilling mind may more
 than trace
 The general sorrows of the human race:

¹ As Schreck-Horn, the pike of terror. Wetter-Horn the pike of storms, &c., &c.

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES

The churlish gales, that unremitting blow
 Cold from necessity's continual snow, 605
 To us the gentle groups of bliss deny
 That on the noon-day bank of leisure lie.
 Yet more; the tyrant Genius, still at strife
 With all the tender Charities of life,
 When close and closer they begin to
 strain, 610
 No fond hand left to staunch th' unclosing
 vein,
 Tearing their bleeding ties leaves Age to
 groan
 On his wet bed, abandon'd and alone.
 For ever, fast as they of strength become
 To pay the filial debt, for food to roam,
 The father forc'd by Powers that only
 deign 615
 That solitary Man disturb their reign,
 From his bare nest amid the storms of
 heaven
 Drives, eagle-like, his sons as he was
 driven,
 His last dread pleasure! watches to the
 plain— 620
 And never, eagle-like, beholds again.
 When the poor heart has all its joys
 resign'd,
 Why does their sad remembrance cleave
 behind?
 Lo! by the lazy Seine the exile roves,
 Or where thick sails illumine Batavia's
 groves; 625
 Soft o'er the waters mournful measures
 swell,
 Unlocking bleeding Thought's 'memorial
 cell;
 At once upon his heart Despair has set
 Her seal, the mortal tear his cheek has wet;
 Strong poison not a form of steel can
 brave 630
 Bows his young hairs with sorrow to the
 grave.¹
 Gay lark of hope thy silent song
 resume!
 Fair smiling lights the purpled hills illumine!
 Soft gales and dews of life's delicious
 morn,
 And thou! lost fragrance of the heart
 return! 635
 Soon² flies the little joy to man allow'd,
 And tears before him travel like a cloud.
 For come Diseases on, and Penury's rage,
 Labour, and Pain, and Grief, and joyless
 Age,
 And Conscience dogging close his bleed-
 ing way 640
 Cries out, and leads her Spectres to their
 prey,

¹ The effect of the famous air, called in French *Ranz des Vaches*, upon the Swiss troops removed from their native country is well known, as also the inflection of not playing it on pain of death, before the regiments of that nation, in the service of France and Holland.

² *Optima quaque dies, &c.*

'Till Hope-deserted, long in vain his
 breath
 Implores the dreadful untried sleep of
 Death.
 —Mid savage rocks and seas of snow that
 shine
 Between interminable tracts of pine, 645
 Round a lone fane the human Genius
 mourn,
 Where fierce the rays of woe collected
 burn.
 —From viewless lamps a ghastly dimness
 falls,
 And ebbs uncertain on the troubled walls,
 Dim dreadful faces thro' the gloom
 appear, 650
 Abortive Joy, and Hope that works in
 fear,
 While strives a secret Power to hush the
 croud,
 Pain's wild rebellious burst proclaims her
 rights aloud.
 Oh give not me that eye of hard dis-
 dain
 That views undimm'd Einsiedlen's
 wretched fane.³ 655
 Mid muttering prayers all sounds of
 torment meet,
 Dire clap of hands, distracted chase of
 feet,
 While loud and dull ascends the weeping
 cry,
 Surely in other thoughts contempt may
 die.
 If the sad grave of human ignorance
 bear 660
 One flower of hope—Oh pass and leave it
 there.
 —The tall Sun, tip-toe on an Alpine
 spire,
 Flings o'er the desert blood-red streams
 of fire.
 At such an hour there are who love to
 stray,
 And meet the gladdening pilgrims on
 their way. 665
 —Now with joy's tearful kiss each other
 greet,
 Nor longer naked be your way-worn feet,
 For ye have reach'd at last the happy
 shore,
 Where the charm'd worm of pain shall
 gnaw no more.
 How gayly murmur and how sweetly
 taste 670
 The fountains⁴ rear'd for you amid the
 waste!

³ This shrine is resorted to, from a hope of relief, by multitudes, from every corner of the Catholic world, labouring under mental or bodily afflictions.

⁴ Fused fountains built and covered with sheds for the accommodation of the pilgrims, in their ascent of the mountain. Under those sheds the sentimental traveller and the philosopher may find interesting sources of meditation.

APPENDIX: POEMS OF 1793

Yes I will see you when ye first behold
Those turrets tipp'd by hope with morn-
ing gold,

And watch, while on your brows the cross
ye make,
Round your pale eyes a wintry lustre
wake. 675

—Without one hope her written griefs to
blot,

Save in the land where all things are
forgot,

My heart, alive to transports long
unknown,

Half wishes your delusion were it's
own.

Last let us turn to where Chamouny¹
shields, 680

Bosom'd in gloomy woods, her golden
fields,

Five streams of ice amid her cots de-
scend,

And with wild flowers and blooming
orchards blend,

A scene more fair than what the Grecian
feigns

Of purple lights and ever vernal plains.
Here lawns and shades by breezy rivulets
fann'd, 686

Here all the Seasons revel hand in hand.
—Red stream the cottage lights; the
landscape fades,

Erroneous wavering mid the twilight
shades.

Alone ascends that mountain nam'd of
white² 690

That dallies with the Sun the summer
night.

Six thousand years amid his lonely bounds
The voice of Ruin, day and night, re-
sounds.

Where Horror-led his sea of ice assails,
Havoc and Chaos blast a thousand vales,

In waves, like two enormous serpents,
wind 696

And drag their length of deluge train
behind.

Between the pine's enormous boughs
descry'd

Serene he towers, in deepest purple dy'd;
Glad Day-light laughs upon his top of
snow, 700

Glitter the stars above, and all is black
below.

At such an hour I heav'd the human
sigh,

When roar'd the sullen Arve in anger by,
That not for thee, delicious vale! unfold

Thy reddening orchards, and thy fields of
gold; 705

That thou, the slave of slaves,³ art
doom'd to pine,

While no Italian arts their charms com-
bine

To teach the skirt of thy dark cloud to
shine;

For thy poor babes that, hurrying from
the door,

With pale-blue hands, and eyes that fix'd
implore, 710

Dead muttering lips, and hair of hungry
white,

Besiege the traveller whom they half
affright.

—Yes, were it mine, the cottage meal to
share

Forc'd from my native mountains bleak
and bare;

O'er Anet's⁴ hopeless seas of marsh to
stray, 715

Her shrill winds roaring round my lonely
way;

To scent the sweets of Piedmont's breath-
ing rose,

And orange gale that o'er Lugano blows;
In the wide range of many a weary
round,

Still have my pilgrim feet unfailing
found, 720

As despot courts their blaze of gems
display,

Ev'n by the secret cottage far away
The lily of domestic joy decay;

While Freedom's farthest hamlets bless-
ings share,

Found still beneath her smile, and only
there, 725

The casement shade more luscious wood-
bine binds,

And to the door a neater pathway winds,
At early morn the careful housewife, led
To cull her dinner from it's garden bed,

Of weedless herbs a healthier prospect
sees, 730

While hum with busier joy her happy
bees;

In brighter rows her table wealth as-
pires,

And laugh with merrier blaze her evening
fires;

Her infant's cheeks with fresher roses
glow,

And wilder graces sport around their
brow; 735

By clearer taper lit a cleanlier board
Receives at supper hour her tempting
hoard;

The chamber hearth with fresher boughs
is spread,

And whiter is the hospitable bed.

¹ This word is pronounced upon the spot Chamouny, I have taken the liberty of reading it long thinking it more musical.

² It is only from the higher part of the valley of Chamouny that Mont Blanc is visible.

³ It is scarce necessary to observe that these lines were written before the emancipation of Savoy.

⁴ A vast extent of marsh so called near the lake of Neufchatel.

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES

—And thou! fair favoured region! which
 my soul ⁷⁴⁰
 Shall love, 'till Life has broke her golden
 bowl,
 Till Death's cold touch her cistern-wheel
 assail,
 And vain regret and vain desire shall fail;
 Tho' now, where erst the grey-clad peasant
 stray'd,
 To break the quiet of the village shade
 Gleam war's¹ discordant habits thro' the
 trees, ⁷⁴⁶
 And the red banner mock the sullen
 breeze;
 'Tho' now no more thy maids their voices
 suit
 To the low-warbled breath of twilight lute,
 And heard, the pausing village hum
 between, ⁷⁵⁰
 No solemn songstress lull the fading green,
 Scared by the fife, and rumbling drum's
 alarms,
 And the short thunder, and the flash of
 arms;
 While, as Night bids the startling uproar
 die,
 Sole sound, the sound² renews his mourn-
 ful cry: ⁷⁵⁵
 —Yet, hast thou found that Freedom
 spreads her pow'r
 Beyond the cottage hearth, the cottage
 door:
 All nature smiles; and owns beneath her
 eyes
 Her fields peculiar, and peculiar skies.
 Yes, as I roam'd where Loiret's³ waters
 glide ⁷⁶⁰

¹ This, as may be supposed, was written before France became the seat of war.

² An insect so called, which emits a short, melancholy cry, heard, at the close of the summer evenings, on the banks of the Loire.

³ The river Loiret, which has the honour of giving name to a department, rises out of the earth at a place, called La Source, a league and a half south-east of Orleans, and taking at once the character of a considerable stream, winds under a most delicious bank on its left, with a flat country of meadows, woods, and vineyards on its right, till it falls into the Loire about three or four leagues below Orleans. The hand of false taste has committed on its banks those outrages which the Abbé de Lille so pathetically deprecates in those charming verses descriptive of the Seine, visiting in secret the retreat of his friend Watteau. Much as the Loiret, in its short course, suffers from injudicious ornament, yet are there spots to be found upon its banks as soothing as meditation could wish for: the curious traveller may meet with some of them where it loses itself among the mills in the neighbourhood of the villa called La Fontaine. The walks of La Source, where it takes its rise, may, in the eyes of some people, derive an additional interest from the recollection that they were the retreat of Bolingbroke during his exile, and that here it was that his philosophical works were chiefly composed. The inscriptions of which he speaks in one of his letters to Swift descriptive of this spot, are not, I believe, now extant. The gardens have been modelled within these twenty years according to a plan evidently not dictated by the taste of the friend of Pope.

Thro' rustling aspens heard from side to
 side,
 When from october clouds a milder
 light
 Fell, where the blue flood rippled into
 white,
 Methought from every cot the watchful
 bird
 Crowed with ear-piercing power 'till then
 unheard; ⁷⁶⁵
 Each clacking mill, that broke the
 murmuring streams,
 Rock'd the charm'd thought in more
 delightful dreams,
 Chasing those long long dreams the fall-
 ing leaf
 Awoke a fainter pang of moral grief;
 The measured echo of the distant fall ⁷⁷⁰
 Winded in sweeter cadence down the vale;
 A more majestic tide the water¹ roll'd
 And glowed the sun-gilt groves in richer
 gold:
 —Tho' Liberty shall soon, indignant, raise
 Red on his hills his beacon's comet
 blaze; ⁷⁷⁵
 Bid from on high his lonely cannon
 sound,
 And on ten thousand hearths his shout
 rebound;
 His larum-bell from village-tow'r to tow'r
 Swing on th' astounded ear it's dull
 undying roar:
 Yet, yet rejoice, tho' Pride's perverted ire
 Rouze Hell's own aid, and wrap thy hills
 in fire. ⁷⁸¹
 Lo! from th' innocuous flames, a lovely
 birth!
 With it's own Virtues springs another
 earth:
 Nature, as in her prime, her virgin reign
 Begins, and Love and Truth compose her
 train; ⁷⁸⁵
 With pulseless hand, and fix'd unwearied
 gaze,
 Unbreathing Justice her still beam
 surveys:
 No more, along thy vales and viny groves,
 Whole hamlets disappearing as he moves,
 With cheeks o'erspread by smiles of bale-
 ful glow, ⁷⁹⁰
 On his pale horse shall fell Consumption
 go.
 Oh give, great God, to Freedom's
 waves to ride
 Sublime o'er Conquest, Avarice, and
 Pride,
 To break, the vales where Death with
 Famine scow'rs,
 And dark Oppression builds her thick-
 ribb'd tow'rs; ⁷⁹⁵

¹ The duties upon many of the French rivers were so exorbitant that the poorer people, deprived of the benefit of water carriage, were obliged to transport their goods by land.

APPENDIX: POEMS OF 1793

Where Machination her fell soul resigns,
Fled panting to the centre of her mines;
Where Persecution decks with ghastly
smiles
Her bed, his mountains mad Ambition
piles;
Where Discord stalks dilating, every
hour, ⁸⁰⁰
And crouching fearful at the feet of
Pow'r,
Like Lightnings eager for th' almighty
word,
Look up for sign of havoc, Fire and
Sword,¹

¹ ————— And, at his heels,
Leash'd in like hounds, should Famine, Sword,
and Fire,
Crouch for employment.

—Give them, beneath their breast while
Gladness springs,
To brood the nations o'er with Nile-like
wings; ⁸⁰⁵
And grant that every sceptred child of
clay,
Who cries, presumptuous, 'here their
tides shall stay,'
Swept in their anger from th' affrighted
shore,
With all his creatures sink—to rise no
more.
To-night, my friend, within this humble
cot ⁸¹⁰
Be the dead load of mortal ills forgot,
Renewing, when the rosy summits glow
At morn, our various journey, sad and
slow.

SUPPLEMENT

OF PIECES NOT APPEARING IN THE EDITION OF 1849-50

ARRANGED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

I LINES

WRITTEN AS A SCHOOL EXERCISE AT
HAWKSHEAD, ANNO ÆTATIS 14

[Composed 1784-5.—Published 1851 (*Memoirs
of W.*)]

'I was called upon, among other scholars,' Wordsworth says, 'to write verses upon the completion of the second centenary from the foundation of the school in 1585, by Archbishop Sandys. The verses were much admired, far more than they deserved, for they were but a tame imitation of Pope's versification, and a little in his style. This exercise, however, put it into my head to compose verses from the impulse of my own mind, and I wrote, while yet a schoolboy, a long poem running upon my own adventures, and the scenery of the country in which I was brought up. The only part of that poem which has been preserved is the conclusion of it, which stands at the beginning of my collected Poems.' (See *Extract from the Conclusion of a Poem, &c.*, page 1.)—ED.

*AND has the Sun his flaming chariot
driven
Two hundred times around the ring of
heaven,
Since Science first, with all her sacred
train,
Beneath yon roof began her heavenly
reign?
While thus I mused, methought, before
mine eyes,

The Power of EDUCATION seemed to
rise;
Not she whose rigid precepts trained the
boy
Dead to the sense of every finer joy;
Nor that vile wretch who bade the tender
age
Spurn Reason's law and humour Passion's
rage; ¹⁰
But she who trains the generous British
youth
In the bright paths of fair majestic Truth:
Emerging slow from Academus' grove
In heavenly majesty she seem'd to move.
Stern was her forehead, but a smile serene
"Softened the terrors of her awful mien."
Close at her side were all the powers,
design'd
To curb, exalt, reform the tender mind:
With panting breast, now pale as winter
snows, ¹⁹
Now flush'd as Hebe, Emulation rose;
Shame follow'd after with reverted eye,
And hue far deeper than the Tyrian dye;
Last Industry appear'd with steady pace,
A smile sat beaming on her pensive face.
I gazed upon the visionary train, ²⁵
Threw back my eyes, return'd, and gazed
again.
When lo! the heavenly goddess thus
began,
Through all my frame the pleasing accents
ran.

PIECES NOT APPEARING IN EDITION OF 1849-50

"When Superstition left the golden
 light
 And fled indignant to the shades of night;
 When pure Religion rear'd the peaceful
 breast 31
 And lull'd the warring passions into
 rest,
 Drove far away the savage thoughts that
 roll
 In the dark mansions of the bigot's soul,
 Enlivening Hope display'd her cheerful
 ray, 35
 And beam'd on Britain's sons a brighter
 day;
 So when on Ocean's face the storm sub-
 sides,
 Hush'd are the winds and silent are the
 tides;
 The God of day, in all the pomp of light,
 Moves through the vault of heaven, and
 dissipates the night; 40
 Wide o'er the main a trembling lustre
 plays,
 The glittering waves reflect the dazzling
 blaze;
 Science with joy saw Superstition fly
 Before the lustre of Religion's eye;
 With rapture she beheld Britannia smile,
 Clapp'd her strong wings, and sought the
 cheerful isle, 46
 The shades of night no more the soul
 involve,
 She sheds her beam, and, lo! the shades
 dissolve;
 No jarring monks, to gloomy cell con-
 fined, 49
 With mazy rules perplex the weary mind;
 No shadowy forms enrice the soul aside,
 Secure she walks, Philosophy her guide,
 Britain, who long her warriors had adored,
 And deem'd all merit centred in the sword;
 Britain, who thought to stain the field was
 fame, 55
 Now honour'd Edward's less than Bacon's
 name.
 Her sons no more in listed fields advance
 To ride the ring, or toss the beamy lance;
 No longer steel their indurated hearts
 To the mild influence of the finer arts; 60
 Quick to the secret grotto they retire
 To court majestic truth, or wake the
 golden lyre;
 By generous Emulation taught to rise,
 The seats of learning brave the distant
 skies.
 Then noble Sandys, inspir'd with great
 design, 65
 Reared Hawkshead's happy roof, and
 call'd it mine.
 There have I loved to show the tender age
 The golden precepts of the classic page;
 To lead the mind to those Elysian plains
 Where, throned in gold, immortal Science
 reigns; 70

Fair to the view is sacred Truth display'd,
 In all the majesty of light array'd,
 To teach, on rapid wings, the curious soul
 To roam from heaven to heaven, from
 pole to pole,
 From thence to search the mystic cause of
 things 75
 And follow Nature to her secret springs;
 Nor less to guide the fluctuating youth
 Firm in the sacred paths of moral truth,
 To regulate the mind's disordered frame,
 And quench the passions kindling into
 flame; 80
 The glimmering fires of Virtue to enlarge,
 And purge from Vice's dross my tender
 charge.
 Oft have I said, the paths of Fame pursue,
 And all that Virtue dictates, dare to do;
 Go to the world, peruse the book of man,
 And learn from thence thy own defects to
 scan; 86
 Severely honest, break no plighted trust,
 But coldly rest not here—be more than
 just;
 Join to the rigours of the sires of Rome
 The gentler manners of the private dome;
 When Virtue weeps in agony of woe, 91
 Teach from the heart the tender tear to
 flow;
 If Pleasure's soothing song thy soul
 entice,
 Or all the gaudy pomp of splendid Vice,
 Arise superior to the Siren's power, 95
 The wretch, the short-lived vision of an
 hour;
 Soon fades her cheek, her blushing
 beauties fly,
 As fades the chequer'd bow that paints
 the sky.
 "So shall thy sire, whilst hope his
 breast inspires,
 And wakes anew life's glimmering
 trembling fires, 100
 Hear Britain's sons rehearse thy praise
 with joy,
 Look up to heaven, and bless his darling
 boy.
 If e'er these precepts quell'd the passions'
 strife,
 If e'er they smooth'd the rugged walks of
 life,
 If e'er they pointed forth the blissful way
 That guides the spirit to eternal day, 106
 Do thou, if gratitude inspire thy breast,
 Spurn the soft fetters of lethargic rest.
 Awake, awake! and snatch the slumbering
 lyre,
 Let this bright morn and Sandys the song
 inspire." 110
 'I look'd obedience: the celestial Fair
 Smiled like the morn. and vanish'd into
 air.'

SUPPLEMENT OF PIECES

II

SONNET, ON SEEING MISS HELEN MARIA WILLIAMS WEEP AT A TALE OF DISTRESS

[Composed 1787.—Published March, 1787 (*The European Magazine*, Vol. XI, p. 202); never reprinted by W.]

SHE wept.—Life's purple tide began to flow

In languid streams through every thrilling vein;

Dim were my swimming eyes—my pulse beat slow,

And my full heart was swell'd to dear delicious pain.

Life left my loaded heart, and closing eye;

A sigh recall'd the wanderer to my breast;

Dear was the pause of life, and dear the sigh

That call'd the wanderer home, and home to rest.

That tear proclaims—in thee each virtue dwells,

And bright will shine in misery's midnight hour;

As the soft star of dewy evening tells

What radiant fires were drown'd by day's malignant pow'r,

That only wait the darkness of the night

To cheer the wand'ring wretch with hospitable light.

AXIOLOGUS.

III

THE BIRTH OF LOVE

[Composed 1795 (?).—Published 1795.]

Reprinted from a vol. entitled *Poems by Francis Wrangham, M.A.* A translation (signed *Wordsworth*) of some French stanzas signed *Anon.*; never reprinted by Wordsworth.—Ed.

WHEN Love was born of heavenly line,

What dire intrigues disturbed *Cythera's* joy!

Till VENUS cried, 'A mother's heart is mine;

None but myself shall nurse my boy.'

But, infant as he was, the child

In that divine embrace enchanted lay;

And, by the beauty of the vase beguil'd,

Forgot the beverage—and pin'd away.

'And must my offspring languish in my sight?'

(Alive to all a mother's pain,

The Queen of Beauty thus her court address'd)

'No: Let the most discreet of all my train

Receive him to her breast:

Think all, he is the God of young delight.'

Then TENDERNESS with CANDOUR join'd,

And GAUITY the charming office sought;

Nor even DELICACY stayed behind:

But none of those fair Graces brought

Wherewith to nurse the child—and still he pin'd.

Some fond hearts to COMPLIANCE seem'd inclin'd;

But she had surely spoil'd the boy:

And sad experience forbade a thought

On the wild Goddess of VOLUPTUOUS Joy.

Long undecided lay th' important choice,

Till of the beauteous court, at length, a voice

Pronounced the name of HOPE:—The conscious child

Stretched forth his little arms and smil'd.

'Tis said ENJOYMENT (who averr'd

The charge belong'd to her alone)

Jealous that HOPE had been preferr'd

Laid snares to make the babe her own.

OF INNOCENCE the garb she took,

The blushing mien and downcast look;

And came her services to proffer:

And HOPE (what has not HOPE believ'd!)

By that seducing air deceiv'd,

Accepted of the offer.

It happen'd that, to sleep inclin'd,

Deluded HOPE for one short hour

To that false INNOCENCE's power

Her little charge consign'd.

The Goddess then her lap with sweetmeats fill'd

And gave, in handfuls gave, the treacherous store:

A wild delirium first the infant thrill'd;

But soon upon her breast he sunk—to wake no more.

IV

THE CONVICT

[Composed (?)—Published 1798; never reprinted by W.]

THE glory of evening was spread through the west;

—On the slope of a mountain I stood,

While the joy that precedes the calm season of rest

Rang loud through the meadow and wood.

'And must we then part from a dwelling so fair?'

In the pain of my spirit I said,

And with a deep sadness I turned, to repair

To the cell where the convict is laid.

NOT APPEARING IN EDITION OF 1849-50

The thick-ribbed walls that o'ershadow
the gate
Resound; and the dungeons unfold: 10
I pause; and at length, through the
glimmering grate,
That outcast of pity behold.

His black matted hair on his shoulder is
bent,
And deep is the sigh of his breath,
And with steadfast dejection his eyes are
intent 15

On the fetters that link him to death.
'Tis sorrow enough on that visage to gaze,
That body dismiss'd from his care;
Yet my fancy has pierced to his heart, and
pours
More terrible images there. 20

His bones are consumed, and his life-
blood is dried,
With wishes the past to undo;
And his crime, through the pains that o'er-
whelm him, descried,
Still blackens and grows on his view.

When from the dark synod, or blood-
reeking field, 25
To his chamber the monarch is led,
All soothers of sense their soft virtue shall
yield,
And quietness pillow his head.

But if grief, self-consumed, in oblivion
would doze,
And conscience her tortures appease,
'Mid tumult and uproar this man must
repose; 31

In the comfortless vault of disease.
When his fetters at night have so press'd
on his limbs,
That the weight can no longer be borne,
If, while a half-slumber his memory
bedims, 35

The wretch on his pallet should turn,
While the jail-mastiff howls at the dull
clanking chain,
From the roots of his hair there shall
start

A thousand sharp punctures of cold-
sweating pain,
And terror shall leap at his heart. 40

But now he half-raises his deep-sunken
eye,

And the motion unsettles a tear;
The silence of sorrow it seems to supply,
And asks of me why I am here.

'Poor victim! no idle intruder has stood
With o'erweening complacence our
state to compare, 46
But one, whose first wish is the wish to be
good,
Is come as a brother thy sorrows to
share.

'At thy name though compassion her
nature resign,
Though in virtue's proud mouth thy
report be a stain, 50
My care, if the arm of the mighty were
mine,
Would plant thee where yet thou
might'st blossom again.'

V

ANDREW JONES

[Composed probably 1800.—Published 1800, 1802,
1805 (*Lyrical Ballads*); ed. 1815; omitted from
edd. 1820—1849-50.]

I HATE that Andrew Jones: he'll breed
His children up to waste and pillage.
I wish the press-gang or the drum
Would, with its rattling music, come,
And sweep him from the village! 5

I said not this, because he loves
Through the long day to swear and tittle;
But for the poor dear sake of one
To whom a foul deed he had done,
A friendless Man, a travelling Cripple! 10

For this poor crawling helpless wretch
Some Horseman who was passing by,
A penny on the ground had thrown;
But the poor Cripple was alone
And could not stoop—no help was nigh.

Inch-thick the dust lay on the ground 16
For it had long been droughty weather;
So with his staff the Cripple wrought
Among the dust till he had brought
The halfpennies together. 20

It chanc'd that Andrew pass'd that way
Just at the time; and there he found
The Cripple in the mid-day heat
Standing alone, and at his feet
He saw the penny on the ground. 25

He stooped and took the penny up:
And when the Cripple nearer drew,
Quoth Andrew, 'Under half-a-crown,
What a man finds is all his own,
And so, my Friend, good-day to you.'

And hence I say, that Andrew's boys 31
Will all be train'd to waste and pillage;
And wish'd the press-gang, or the drum
Would, with its rattling music, come,
And sweep him from the village! 35

VI

'ON NATURE'S INVITATION DO I COME'

[Composed probably in 1800.—Published 1851.]

ON Nature's invitation do I come,
By Reason sanctioned. Can the choice
mislead,
That made the calmest, fairest spot on
earth,
With all its unappropriated good,

SUPPLEMENT OF PIECES

My own; and not mine only, for with me
Entrenched—say rather peacefully em-
bowed— 6

Under yon orchard, in yon humble cot,
A younger orphan of a Home extinct,
The only daughter of my parents dwells:
Aye, think on that, my heart, and cease to
stir; 10

Pause upon that, and let the breathing
frame

No longer breathe, but all be satisfied.
Oh, if such silence be not thanks to God
For what hath been bestowed, then where,
where then

Shall gratitude find rest? Mine eyes did
ne'er 15

Fix on a lovely object, nor my mind
Take pleasure in the midst of happy
thoughts,

But either she, whom now I have, who now
Divides with me this loved abode, was
there,

Or not far off. Where'er my footsteps
turned, 20

Her voice was like a hidden Bird that sang;
The thought of her was like a flash of light
Or an unseen companionship, a breath
Or fragrance independent of the wind.

In all my goings, in the new and old 25
Of all my meditations, and in this
Favourite of all, in this the most of all. . .

Embrace me then, ye hills, and close me in.
Now in the clear and open day I feel 29
Your guardianship: I take it to my heart;
'Tis like the solemn shelter of the night.

But I would call thee beautiful; for mild,
And soft, and gay, and beautiful thou art,
Dear valley, having in thy face a smile,
Though peaceful, full of gladness. Thou
art pleased, 35

Pleased with thy crags, and woody steeps,
thy Lake,

Its one green Island, and its winding shores,
The multitude of little rocky hills,
Thy Church, and cottages of mountain-
stone

Clustered like stars some few, but single
most, 40

And lurking dimly in their shy retreats,
Or glancing at each other cheerful looks,
Like separated stars with clouds between.

VII¹

'BLEAK SEASON WAS IT, TURBU-
LENT AND WILD'

[Composed (possibly) in 1800.—Published 1851.]

BLEAK season was it, turbulent and wild,
When hitherward we journeyed, side by
side,

¹ Nos. VI and VII are extracts, given by Bishop Wordsworth in his *Memoirs of the poet* (1851), from *The Recluse, Book I, Part I, Home at Grassmere*—a poem which, being copyright, is not included in this volume. For two other extracts from the same

Through bursts of sunshine and through
flying showers,
Paced the long Vales, how long they were,
and yet

How fast that length of way was left
behind, 5
Wensley's rich Vale and Sedbergh's naked
heights.

The frosty wind, as if to make amends
For its keen breath, was aiding to our
steps,

And drove us onward as two ships at sea;
Or, like two birds, companions in mid-air,
Parted and reunited by the blast. 11

Stern was the face of nature; we rejoiced
In that stern countenance; for our souls
thence drew

A feeling of their strength. The naked
trees,

The icy brooks, as on we passed, appeared
To question us, 'Whence come ye? To
what end?' 16

VIII

AMONG ALL LOVELY THINGS MY
LOVE HAD BEEN

[Composed April 12, 1802.—Published 1807;
never reprinted by W.]

AMONG all lovely things my Love had
been;

Had noted well the stars, all flowers that
grew

About her home; but she had never seen
A Glow-worm, never one, and this I
knew.

While riding near her home one stormy
night 5

A single Glow-worm did I chance to espy;
I gave a fervent welcome to the sight,

And from my Horse I leapt; great joy
had I.

Upon a leaf the Glow-worm did I lay,
To bear it with me through the stormy
night: 10

And, as before, it shone without dismay;
Albeit putting forth a fainter light.

When to the Dwelling of my Love I came,
I went into the Orchard quietly;

And left the Glow-worm, blessing it by
name, 15

Laid safely by itself, beneath a Tree.

The whole next day, I hoped, and hoped
with fear;

At night the Glow-worm shone beneath
the Tree:

I led my Lucy to the spot, 'Look here!'
Oh! joy it was for her, and joy for me!¹

poem see *Water-Fowl*, page 174, and the *Preface to The Excursion*.—ED.

¹ The incident described in this poem took place in 1795—probably at Racedown—between the poet and his sister Dorothy.—ED.

IX

SONNET¹

[Composed (?).—Published October 10, 1803 (*Morning Post*); never reprinted by W.]

I FIND it written of Simonides
That travelling in strange countries
once he found
A corpse that lay expos'd upon the
ground,
For which, with pains, he caused due
obsequies
To be performed, and paid all holy fees. 5
Soon after, this man's Ghost unto him
came
And told him not to sail as was his aim,
On board a ship then ready for the seas.
Simonides, admonished by the ghost,
Remained behind; the ship the following
day 10
Set sail, was wrecked, and all on board
were lost.
Thus was the tenderest Poet that could be,
Who sang in ancient Greece his moving
lay,
Saved out of many by his piety.

X

GEORGE AND SARAH GREEN²

[Composed 1808.—Published September, 1839 (*Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*); never reprinted by W.]

WHO weeps for strangers? Many wept
For George and Sarah Green;
Wept for that pair's unhappy fate,
Whose grave may here be seen.
By night, upon these stormy fells, 5
Did wife and husband roam;
Six little ones at home had left,
And could not find that home.
For any dwelling-place of man
As vainly did they seek. 10
He perish'd; and a voice was heard—
The widow's lonely shriek.
Not many steps, and she was left
A body without life—
A few short steps were the chain that
bound 15
The husband to the wife.
Now do those sternly-featured hills
Look gently on this grave;
And quiet now are the depths of air,
As a sea without a wave. 20

¹ This sonnet bears no signature in the *Morning Post*, but Coleridge, in an unpublished letter, assigns it to Wordsworth. Cf. line 12 with line 53 of the Poem, No. II, on September, 1819 (*Poems of Sentiment*, XXVIII, p. 498), and with a passage in the *Essay on Epitaphs* (page 729) in which the story of this sonnet is related in prose.—ED.

² See De Quincey's *Early Memorials of Grassmere*.—ED.

But deeper lies the heart of peace
In quiet more profound;
The heart of quietness is here
Within this churchyard bound.
And from all agony of mind 25
It keeps them safe, and far
From fear and grief, and from all need
Of sun or guiding star.
O darkness of the grave! how deep,
After that living night— 30
That last and dreary living one
Of sorrow and affright?
O sacred marriage-bed of death,
That keeps them side by side
In bond of peace, in bond of love, 3
That may not be untied!

XI

TRANSLATION OF PART OF THE
FIRST BOOK OF THE ÆNEID

[Written c. 1816.—Published 1832 (*The Philologist's Museum*); not reprinted by W.]

TO THE EDITORS OF THE 'PHILOLOGICAL
MUSEUM'

Your letter, reminding me of an expectation I
some time since held out to you of allowing some
specimens of my translation from the Æneid to
be printed in the 'Philological Museum,' was
not very acceptable; for I had abandoned the
thought of ever sending into the world any part
of that experiment—for it was nothing more—
an experiment begun for amusement, and I now
think a less fortunate one than when I first
named it to you. Having been displeased in
modern translations with the additions of incon-
gruous matter, I began to translate with a resolve
to keep clear of that fault, by adding nothing;
but I became convinced that a spirited transla-
tion can scarcely be accomplished in the English
language without admitting a principle of com-
pensation. On this point, however, I do not wish
to insist, and merely send the following passage,
taken at random, from a wish to comply with
your request.—W. W.

BUT Cytherea, studious to invent
Arts yet untried, upon new counsels bent,
Resolves that Cupid, chang'd in form and
face
To young Ascanius, should assume his
place;
Present the maddening gifts, and kindle
heat 5
Of passion at the bosom's inmost seat.
She dreads the treacherous house, the
double tongue;
She burns, she frets—by Juno's rancour
stung;
The calm of night is powerless to remove
These cares, and thus she speaks to winged
Love: 10
'O son, my strength, my power! who
dost despise
(What, save thyself, none dares through
earth and skies)

SUPPLEMENT OF PIECES

The giant-quelling bolts of Jove, I flee,
 O son, a suppliant to thy deity!
 What perils meet Æneas in his course, 15
 How Juno's hate with unrelenting force
 Pursues thy brother—this to thee is
 known;
 And oft-times hast thou made my griefs
 thine own.
 Him now the generous Dido by soft chains
 Of bland entreaty at her court detains; 20
 Junonian hospitalities prepare
 Such apt occasion that I dread a snare.
 Hence, ere some hostile God can inter-
 vene,
 Would I, by previous wiles, inflame the
 queen
 With passion for Æneas, such strong love
 That at my beck, mine only, she shall
 move. 26
 Hear, and assist;—the father's mandate
 calls
 His young Ascanius to the Tyrian walls;
 He comes, my dear delight,—and costliest
 things
 Preserv'd from fire and flood for presents
 brings. 30
 Him will I take, and in close covert keep,
 'Mid groves Idalian, lull'd to gentle sleep,
 Or on Cythera's far-sequestered steep,
 That he may neither know what hope is
 mine,
 Nor by his presence traverse the design.
 Do thou, but for a single night's brief
 space, 36
 Dissemble; be that boy in form and face.
 And when enraptured Dido shall receive
 Thee to her arms, and kisses interweave
 With many a fond embrace, while joy runs
 high, 40
 And goblets crown the proud festivity,
 Instil thy subtle poison, and inspire,
 At every touch, an unsuspected fire.

Love, at the word, before his mother's
 sight
 Puts off his wings, and walks, with proud
 delight, 45
 Like young Iulus; but the gentlest dews
 Of slumber Venus sheds, to circumfuse
 The true Ascanius steep'd in placid rest;
 Then wafts him, cherish'd on her careful
 breast,
 Through upper air to an Idalian glade, 50
 Where he on soft *amaracus* is laid,
 With breathing flowers embraced, and
 fragrant shade.
 But Cupid, following cheerily his guide
 Achates, with the gifts to Carthage hied;
 And, as the hall he entered, there, between
 The sharers of her golden couch, was seen
 Reclin'd in festal pomp the Tyrian queen.
 The Trojans too (Æneas at their head),
 On couches lie, with purple overspread;
 Meantime in canisters is heap'd the bread,

Pellucid water for the hands is borne, 61
 And napkins of smooth texture, finely
 shorn.

Within are fifty handmaids, who prepare,
 As they in order stand, the dainty fare;
 And fume the household deities with store
 Of odorous incense; while a hundred more
 Match'd with an equal number of like age,
 But each of manly sex, a docile page,
 Marshal the banquet, giving with due
 grace

To cup or viand its appointed place. 70
 The Tyrians rushing in, an eager band,
 Their painted couches seek, obedient to
 command.

They look with wonder on the gifts—they
 gaze

Upon Iulus, dazzled with the rays
 That from his ardent countenance are
 flung, 75

And charm'd to hear his simulating
 tongue;

Nor pass unprais'd the robe and veil
 divine,

Round which the yellow flowers and
 wandering foliage twine.

But chiefly Dido, to the coming ill
 Devoted, strives in vain her vast desires to
 fill; 80

She views the gifts; upon the child then
 turns

Insatiable looks, and gazing burns.

To ease a father's cheated love he hung

Upon Æneas, and around him clung;

Then seeks the queen; with her his arts he
 tries; 85

She fastens on the boy enamour'd eyes,
 Clasps in her arms, nor weens (O lot
 unblest!)

How great a God, incumbent o'er her
 breast,

Would fill it with his spirit. He, to please

His Acidalian mother, by degrees 90

Blots out Sichæus, studious to remove

The dead, by influx of a living love,

By stealthy entrance of a perilous guest,

Troubling a heart that had been long at
 rest.

Now when the viands were withdrawn,
 and ceas'd 95

The first division of the splendid feast,

While round a vacant board the chiefs
 recline,

Huge goblets are brought forth; they
 crown the wine;

Voices of gladness roll the walls around;

Those gladsome voices from the courts
 rebound; 100

From gilded rafters many a blazing light

Depends, and torches overcome the night.

The minutes fly—till, at the queen's com-
 mand,

A bowl of state is offered to her hand:

Then she, as Belus wont, and all the line
From Belus, filled it to the brim with
wine; 106

Silence ensued. 'O Jupiter, whose care
Is hospitable dealing, grant my prayer!
Productive day be this of lasting joy
To Tyrians, and these exiles driven from
Troy; 110

A day to future generations dear!
Let Bacchus, donor of soul-quick'ning
cheer,

Be present; kindly Juno, be thou near!
And, Tyrians, may your choicest favours
wait

Upon this hour, the bond to celebrate!
She spake and shed an offering on 'the
board; 116

Then sipp'd the bowl whence she the wine
had pour'd

And gave to Bitias, urging the prompt lord;
He rais'd the bowl, and took a long deep
draught;

Then every chief in turn the beverage
quaff'd. 120

Graced with redundant hair, Iopas sings
The lore of Atlas, to resounding strings,
The labours of the Sun, the lunar wander-
ings;

Whence human kind, and brute; what
natural powers

Engender lightning, whence are falling
showers. 125

He chaunts Arcturus,—that fraternal
twain

The glittering Bears,—the Pleiads fraught
with rain;

—Why suns in winter, shunning heaven's
steep heights

Post seaward,—what impedes the tardy
nights.

The learned song from Tyrian hearers
draws 130

Loud shouts,—the Trojans echo the
applause.

—But, lengthening out the night with
converse new,

Large draughts of love unhappy Dido
drew;

Of Priam ask'd, of Hector,—o'er and
o'er—

What arms the son of bright Aurora
wore;— 135

What steeds the car of Diomed could
boast;

Among the leaders of the Grecian host
How looked Achilles—their dread para-
mount—

'But nay—the fatal wiles, O guest,
recount,

Retrace the Grecian cunning from its
source, 140

Your own grief and your friends'—your
wandering course;

For now, till this seventh summer have
ye rang'd
The sea, or trod the earth, to peace
estrang'd.'

XII

SONNET

AUTHOR'S VOYAGE DOWN THE RHINE
(THIRTY YEARS AGO)

[Composed probably 1821.—Published 1822 (*Memorials of a Tour on the Continent*, 1820); never reprinted by W.]

THE confidence of Youth our only Art,
And Hope gay Pilot of the bold design,
We saw the living Landscapes of the
Rhine,

Reach after reach, salute us and depart;
Slow sink the Spires,—and up again they
start! 5

But who shall count the Towers as they
recline

O'er the dark steeps, or on the horizon
line

Striding, with shattered crests, the eye
athwart?

More touching still, more perfect was the
pleasure,

When hurrying forward till the slack'ning
stream 10

Spread like a spacious Mere, we there
could measure

A smooth free course along the watery
gleam.

Think calmly on the past, and mark at
leisure

Features which else had vanished like
a dream.

XIII

A CENTO MADE BY WORDSWORTH

[Published 1835 (*Yarrow Revisited and other Poems*); never reprinted by W.]

For printing [the following piece] some reason should be given, as not a word of it is original: it is simply a fine stanza of Akenside, connected with a still finer from Beattie, by a couplet from Thomson. This practice, in which the author sometimes indulges, of linking together, in his own mind, favourite passages from different authors, seems in itself unobjectionable; but, as the publishing such compilations might lead to confusion in literature, he should deem himself inexcusable in giving this specimen, were it not from a hope that it might open to others a harmless source of private gratification.—W. W.

THRONED in the Sun's descending car
What Power unseen diffuses far

This tenderness of mind?
What Genius smiles on yonder flood?

What God in whispers from the wood
Bids every thought be kind?

SUPPLEMENT OF PIECES

O ¹er pleasing Solitude,
Companion of the wise and good,
Thy shades, thy silence, now be mine,
Thy charms my only theme; 10
My haunt the hollow cliff whose Pine
Waves o'er the gloomy stream;
Whence the scared Owl on pinions grey
Breaks from the rustling boughs,
And down the lone vale sails away 15
To more profound repose!

XIV

INSCRIPTION ON A ROCK AT RYDAL MOUNT. (1838)

Wouldst thou be gathered to Christ's
chosen flock,
Shun the broad way too easily explored,
And let thy path be hewn out of the Rock,
The living Rock of God's eternal Word.

XV

PROTEST AGAINST THE BALLOT (1838)

[Composed 1838.—Published 1838 (collected vol.
of *Sonnets*); 1839 (Supplement to ed. 1842);
afterwards omitted by W.]

FORTH rushed from Envy sprung and
Self-conceit,
A Power misnamed the SPIRIT OF REFORM,
And through the astonished Island swept
in storm,
Threatening to lay all Orders at her feet
That crossed her way. Now stoops she to
entreat 5
Licence to hide at intervals her head
Where she may work, safe, undisquieted,
In a close Box, covert for Justice meet.
St. George of England! keep a watchful
eye
Fixed on the Sutor; frustrate her re-
quest— 10
Stifle her hope; for, if the State comply,
From such Pandorian gift may come a
Pest
Worse than the Dragon that bowed low
his crest,
Pierced by thy spear in glorious victory.

XVI

A POET TO HIS GRANDCHILD SEQUEL TO 'A PLEA FOR AUTHORS'¹

[Composed 1838.—Same dates and mode of pub-
lication as XV; omitted from edd. 1843—1849—
50.]

'SON of my buried Son, while thus thy
hand
Is clasping mine, it saddens me to think

¹ See page 222.—Ed.

How Want may press thee down, and with
thee sink
Thy Children left unfit, through vain
demand
Of culture, even to feel or understand 5
My simplest Lay that to their memory
May cling;—hard fate! which haply need
not be
Did Justice mould the Statutes of the
Land.
A Book time-cherished and an honoured
name
Are high rewards; but bound they
Nature's claim 10
Or Reason's? No—hopes spun in timid
line
From out the bosom of a modest home
Extend through unambitious years to
come,
My careless Little-one, for thee and thine!'
May 23, 1838.

XVII

ON A PORTRAIT OF I. F. [ISABELLA FENWICK], PAINTED BY MARGA- RET GILLIES¹

We gaze—nor grieve to think that we
must die,
But that the precious love this friend hath
sown
Within our hearts, the love whose flower
hath blown
Bright as if heaven were ever in its eye,
Will pass so soon from human memory: 5
And not by strangers to our blood alone,
But by our best descendants be unknown,
Unthought of—this may surely claim a
sigh.
Yet, blessed Art, we yield not to dejection;
Thou against Time so feelingly dost strive.
Where'er, preserved in this most true
reflection, 11
An image of her soul is kept alive,
Some lingering fragrance of the pure
affection,
Whose flower with us will vanish, must
survive.

RYDAL MOUNT, *New Year's Day*, 1840.

XVIII

TO I. F.

THE star which comes at close of day to
shine
More heavenly bright than when it leads
the morn,
Is Friendship's emblem, whether the
forlorn
She visiteth, or, shedding light benign

¹ XVII and XVIII were first published (1851) in
the *Memoirs of William Wordsworth*, by his nephew,
the late Bishop of Lincoln.—Ed.

Through shades that solemnize Life's
calm decline,⁵
Doth make the happy happier. This have
we

Learnt, Isabel, from thy society,
Which now we too unwillingly resign
Though for brief absence. But farewell!
the page

Glimmers before my sight through thank-
ful tears,¹⁰

Such as start forth, not seldom, to approve
Our truth, when we, old yet unchilled by
age,

Call thee, though known but for a few
fleet years,

The heart-affianced sister of our love!

RYDAL MOUNT, Feb. 1840.

XIX

'WHEN SEVERN'S SWEEPING FLOOD HAD OVERTHROWN'

In 1842 a bazaar was held in Cardiff Castle to raise funds for the building of a Church. Wordsworth assisted by contributing this Sonnet, which was printed and sold along with verses by James Montgomery and others (cf. Prof. Knight's note, in his edition of the *Poems*, Vol. VIII).—Ed.

WHEN SEVERN'S sweeping flood had over-
thrown

St. Mary's Church, the preacher then
would cry:—

'Thus, Christian people, God his might
hath shown

That ye to him your love may testify;
Haste, and rebuild the pile.'—But not
a stone⁵

Resumed its place. Age after age went by,
And Heaven still lacked its due, though
piety

In secret did, we trust, her loss bemoan.
But now her Spirit hath put forth its
claim⁹

In Power, and Poesy would lend her voice;
Let the new Church be worthy of its aim,
That in its beauty Cardiff may rejoice!

Oh! in the past if cause there was for
shame,

Let not our times halt in their better
choice.

RYDAL MOUNT, Jan. 23, 1842.

XX

THE EAGLE AND THE DOVE

[Composed 1842 (?).—Published 1842 (*La Petite Chouannerie ou Histoire d'un Collège Breton sous l'Empire*. By A. F. Rio).]

SHADE of Caractacus, if spirits love
The cause they fought for in their earthly
home,

To see the Eagle ruffled by the Dove
May soothe thy memory of the chains of
Rome.

These children claim thee for their sire;
the breath⁵

Of thy renown, from Cambrian mountains,
fans

A flame within them that despises death
And glorifies the truant youth of Vannes.

With thy own scorn of tyrants they
advance,

But truth divine has sanctified their rage,
A silver cross enchased with Flowers of
France¹¹

Their badge, attests the holy fight they
wage.

The shrill defiance of the young crusade
Their veteran foci mock as an idle noise;

But unto Faith and Loyalty comes aid¹⁵
From Heaven, gigantic force to beardless
boys.

XXI

LINES

INSCRIBED IN A COPY OF HIS POEMS SENT TO
THE QUEEN FOR THE ROYAL LIBRARY AT
WINDSOR

DEIGN, Sovereign Mistress! to accept a
lay,

No Laureate offering of elaborate art;
But salutation taking its glad way
From deep recesses of a loyal heart.

Queen, Wife and Mother! may All-
judging Heaven⁵

Shower with a bounteous hand on Thee
and Thine

Felicity that only can be given
On earth to goodness blest by grace
divine.

Lady! devoutly honoured and beloved
Through every realm confided to thy
sway;¹⁰

May'st thou pursue thy course by God
approved,

And He will teach thy people to obey.

As thou art wont, thy sovereignty adorn
With woman's gentleness, yet firm and
staid;

So shall that earthly crown thy brows have
worn¹⁵

Be changed for one whose glory cannot
fade.

And now by duty urged, I lay this Book
Before thy Majesty, in humble trust

That on its simplest pages thou wilt look
With a benign indulgence more than
just.²⁰

Nor wilt thou blame an aged Poet's
prayer,

That issuing hence may steal into thy
mind

Some solace under weight of royal care,
Or grief—the inheritance of human-
kind.

SUPPLEMENT OF RECES

For know we not that from celestial
spheres, 25

When Time was young, an inspiration
came
(Oh were it mine!) to hallow saddest tears,
And help life onward in its noblest aim,
W. W.

January 9th, 1846.

XXII

ODE ON THE INSTALLATION OF HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE ALBERT AS CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAM- BRIDGE, JULY, 1847¹

[Composed 1847.—Published 1847.]

For thirst of power that Heaven dis-
owns,
For temples, towers, and thrones
Too long insulted by the Spoiler's shock,
Indignant Europe cast
Her stormy foe at last 5

To reap the whirlwind on a Libyan rock.
War is passion's basest game
Madly played to win a name:
Up starts some tyrant, Earth and Heaven
to dare,

The servile million bow; 10
But will the Lightning glance aside to
spare
The Despot's laurelled brow?

War is mercy, glory, fame,
Waged in Freedom's holy cause,
Freedom, such as man may claim 15
Under God's restraining laws.
Such is Albion's fame and glory,
Let rescued Europe tell the story.
But lo! what sudden cloud has darkened
all

The land as with a funeral pall? 20
The Rose of England suffers blight,
The Flower has drooped, the Isle's delight;
Flower and bud together fall;
A Nation's hopes lie crushed in Clare-
mont's desolate Hall.

Time a chequered mantle wears— 25
Earth awakes from wintry sleep:
Again the Tree a blossom bears;
Cease, Britannia, cease to weep!
Hark to the peals on this bright May-
morn!

They tell that your future Queen is born.
A Guardian Angel fluttered 31
Above the babe, unseen;
One word he softly uttered,
It named the future Queen; 34
And a joyful cry through the Island rang,
As clear and bold as the trumpet's clang,

¹ The poet's nephew Christopher (late Bishop of Lincoln) aided in the composition of this 'com-
manded' Ode.—Ed.

As bland as the reed of peace:
'VICTORIA be her name!'

For righteous triumphs are the base
Whereon Britannia rests her peaceful
fame. 40

Time, in his mantle's sunniest fold
Uplifted in his arms the child,
And while the fearless infant smiled,
Her happier destiny foretold:—
'Infancy, by Wisdom mild, 45
Trained to health and artless beauty;
Youth, by pleasure unbeguiled
From the lore of lofty duty;
Womanhood in pure renown,
Seated on her lineal throne; 50
Leaves of myrtle in her Crown,
Fresh with lustre all their own.
Love, the treasure worth possessing
More than all the world beside,
This shall be her choicest blessing, 55
Oft to royal hearts denied.'

That eve, the Star of Brunswick shone
With steadfast ray benign
On Gotha's ducal roof, and on
The softly flowing Leine, 60
Nor failed to gild the spires of Bonn,
And glittered on the Rhine.
Old Camus, too, on that prophetic night
Was conscious of the ray;
And his willows whispered in its light, 65
Not to the Zephyr's sway,
But with a Delphic life, in sight
Of this auspicious day—
This day, when Granta hails her chosen
Lord,

And, proud of her award, 70
Confiding in that Star serene,
Welcomes the Consort of a happy Queen.
Prince, in these collegiate bowers,
Where science, leagued with holier
truth,
Guards the sacred heart of youth, 75
Solemn monitors are ours.
These reverend aisles, these hallowed
towers,

Raised by many a hand august,
Are haunted by majestic Powers,
The Memories of the Wise and Just, 80
Who, faithful to a pious trust,
Here, in the Founder's Spirit sought
To mould and stamp the ore of thought
In that bold form and impress high
That best betoken patriot loyalty. 85
Not in vain those Sages taught,—
True disciples, good as great,
Have pondered here their country's
weal,

Weighed the Future by the Past,
Learned how social frames may last, 90
And how a Land may rule its fate
By constancy inviolate,
Though worlds to their foundations reel
The sport of factious Hate or godless Zeal.

NOT APPEARING IN EDITION OF

Albert, in thy race we cheer⁹⁵
 A Nation's strength that will not perish
 While England's sceptred Line
 True to the King of Kings is found
 Like that Wise ancestor of thine
 Who threw the Saxon shield o'er Luther's
 life¹⁰⁰
 When first, above the yells of bigot strife,
 The trumpet of the Living Word
 Assumed a voice of deep, portentous
 sound,
 From gladdened Elbe to startled Tiber
 heard.
 What shield more sublime¹⁰⁵
 E'er was blazoned or sung?
 And the PRINCE whom we greet
 From its Hero is sprung.
 Resound, resound the strain
 That hails him for our own!¹¹⁰
 Again, again, and yet again,
 For the Church, the State, the Throne!
 And that Presence fair and bright,
 Ever blest wherever seen,
 Who deigns to grace our festal rite,¹¹⁵
 The Pride of the Islands, VICTORIA
 THE QUEEN!

XXIII QUINZAIN

CONJECTURALLY ASSIGNED TO WORDS-
 WORTH

[Composed (?).—Published 1802 (*Morning Post*);
 never reprinted by W.]

A writer (E. H. C.) in the *Athenæum* of November 4, 1893, suggests that the following lines, which appeared in the *Morning Post* on February 9, 1802, were probably composed by Wordsworth. 'It may be remembered,' writes E. H. C., 'that the phrase "monthly grave" is to be found in *Lines to the Moon* (1835); and in one of Wordsworth's latest sonnets, that *To Lucca Giordano*, the aged poet turns with pleasure to the delightful vision of "young Endymion, couched on Latmos Hill." The suggestion is undoubtedly a happy one. The

rhyme-arrangement of these lines resembles that of the piece beginning *With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the Sky*, which first appeared in *Poems in Two Volumes* (1807), but may have been written in or about 1802. Both pieces appear to be experiments in metre. They are neither sonnets nor quinzains, but quinzains, or stanzas consisting of fifteen lines each; though that published in 1807 was subsequently curtailed by one line and placed amongst the *Miscellaneous Sonnets* (1815 onwards). Moreover, the turn of the sentence in lines 8 and 9—the repetition of the substantive (*Nymphs*) in apposition, qualified by an adjective or adjectival phrase—is of frequent occurrence in Wordsworth's poetry. Cf. *Misc. Son.*, Part II, *xxxvii*, 7, 8:—

'As if to vindicate her beauty's right,
 Her beauty thoughtlessly disparaged.'—Ed.¹

WRITTEN IN A GROTTTO

O MOON! if e'er I joyed when thy soft light
 Danc'd to the murmuring rill on
 Lomond's wave,
 Or sighed for thy sweet presence some
 dark night,
 When thou wert hidden in thy monthly
 grave;
 If e'er, on wings which active fancy gave,
 I sought thy golden vale with dancing
 flight,⁶
 Then, stretch at ease in some sequestered
 cave,
 Gaz'd on thy lovely Nymphs with fond
 delight,
 Thy Nymphs with more than earthly
 beauty bright;
 If e'er thy beam, as Smyrna's shepherds
 tell,¹⁰
 Soft as the gentle kiss of amorous maid
 On the closed eyes of young Endymion
 fell,
 That he might wake to clasp thee in the
 shade:
 Each night, while I recline within this cell,
 Guide hither, O sweet Moon, the maid I
 love so well.¹⁵

¹ [Mr. T. E. Casson points out (1926) that there is no very close resemblance between the rhyme-arrangement of the above and that of the piece beginning *With how sad steps* in its original form of fifteen lines, now subjoined for comparison (for the 14 line form see p. 211):—

'With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the sky,
 How silently, and with how wan a face!
 Where art thou? Thou whom I have seen on high
 Running among the clouds a Wood-nymph's race?
 Unhappy Nuns, whose common breath's a sigh
 Which they would stifle, move at such a pace!
 The Northern Wind, to call thee to the chase,
 Must blow tonight his bugle horn. Had I
 The power of Merlin, Goddess! this should be:
 And all the Stars, now shrouded up in heaven,
 Should rally forth to keep thee company.
 What strife would then be yours, fair Creatures, driv'n
 Now up, now down, and sparkling in your glee!
 But, Cynthia, should to Thee the palm be giv'n.
 Queen both for beauty and for majesty.]

THE PRELUDE

OR

GROWTH OF A POET'S MIND

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL POEM

ADVERTISEMENT.

[BY THE EDITOR OF 1850.]

The following Poem was commenced in the beginning of the year 1799, and completed in the summer of 1805.

The design and occasion of the work are described by the Author in his Preface to the 'Excursion,' first published in 1814, where he thus speaks:—

'Several years ago, when the Author retired to his native mountains with the hope of being enabled to construct a literary work that might live, it was a reasonable thing that he should take a review of his own mind, and examine how far Nature and Education had qualified him for such an employment.

'As subsidiary to this preparation, he undertook to record, in verse, the origin and progress of his own powers, as far as he was acquainted with them.

'That work, addressed to a dear friend, most distinguished for his knowledge and genius, and to whom the Author's intellect is deeply indebted, has been long finished; and the result of the investigation which gave rise to it, was a determination to compose a philosophical Poem, containing views of Man, Nature, and Society, and to be entitled the "Recluse;" as having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement.

'The preparatory poem is biographical, and conducts the history of the Author's mind to the point when he was emboldened to hope that his faculties were sufficiently matured for entering upon the arduous labour which he had proposed to himself; and the two works have the same kind of relation to each other, if he may so express himself, as the Ante-chapel has to the body of a Gothic Church. Continuing this allusion, he may be permitted to add, that his minor pieces, which have been long before the public, when they shall be properly arranged, will be found by the attentive reader to have such connection with the main work as may give them claim to be likened to the little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses, ordinarily included in those edifices.'

Such was the Author's language in the year 1814.

It will thence be seen, that the present Poem was intended to be introductory to the 'Recluse,' and that the 'Recluse,' if completed, would have consisted of Three Parts. Of these, the Second Part alone, viz. the 'Excursion,' was finished, and given to the world by the Author.

The First Book of the First Part of the 'Recluse' still [1850] remains in manuscript; but the Third Part was only planned. The materials of which it would have been formed have, however, been incorporated, for the most part, in the Author's other Publications, written subsequently to the 'Excursion.'

The Friend, to whom the present Poem is addressed, was the late SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE, who was resident in Malta, for the restoration of his health, when the greater part of it was composed.

Mr. Coleridge read a considerable portion of the Poem while he was abroad; and his feelings, on hearing it recited by the Author (after his return to his own country), are recorded in his *Verses*, addressed to Mr. Wordsworth, which will be found in the 'Sibylline Leaves,' p. 197, ed. 1817, or 'Poetical Works,' by S. T. Coleridge, vol. i., p. 206.

RYDAL MOUNT,
July 13th, 1850.

¹ For further information regarding the dates of composition of the several Books of *The Prelude* see *The Prelude*, ed. by E. de Selincourt, 2nd ed., 1928.

THE PRELUDE

BOOK FIRST

INTRODUCTION—CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL-TIME

Oh there is blessing in this gentle breeze,
A visitant that while it fans my cheek
Doth seem half-conscious of the joy it
brings

From the green fields, and from yon
azure sky.

Whate'er its mission, the soft breeze can
come

To none more grateful than to me;
escaped

From the vast city, where I long had
pined

A discontented sojourner: now free,
Free as a bird to settle where I will.

What dwelling shall receive me? in what
vale

Shall be my harbour? underneath what
grove

Shall I take up my home? and what
clear stream

Shall with its murmur lull me into rest?
The earth is all before me. With a heart

Joyous, nor scared at its own liberty, 15
I look about; and should the chosen

guide
Be nothing better than a wandering cloud,
I cannot miss my way. I breathe again!

Trances of thought and mountings of the
mind

Come fast upon me: it is shaken off, 20
That burthen of my own unnatural self,

The heavy weight of many a weary day 25
Not mine, and such as were not made for

me.
Long months of peace (if such bold word

accord
With any promises of human life), 25
Long months of ease and undisturbed

delight
Are mine in prospect; whither shall I

turn,
By road or pathway, or through trackless

field,
Up hill or down, or shall some floating

thing 29
Upon the river point me out my course?

Dear Liberty! Yet what would it avail
But for a gift that consecrates the joy?

For I, methought, while the sweet breath
of heaven

Was blowing on my body, felt within
A correspondent breeze, that gently

moved us as an all-but new
With quickening virtue, but is now

become life & poetry.

A ~~tempest, a redundant energy,~~
Vexing its own creation, Thanks to both,
And their congenial powers, that, while
they join

In breaking up a long-continued frost, 40
Bring with them vernal promises, the

hope
Of active days urged on by flying hours,—

Days of sweet leisure, taxed with patient
thought

Abstruse, nor wanting punctual service 44
high,

Matins and vespers of harmonious verse!

Thus far, O Friend! did I, not used to
make

A present joy the matter of a song, 48
Pour forth that day my soul in measured

strains
That would not be forgotten, and are

here
Recorded: to the open fields I told 50
A prophecy: poetic numbers came, & die

Spontaneously to clothe in priestly robe
A renovated spirit singled out,

Such hope was mine, for holy services. 52
My own voice cheered me, and, far more,

the mind's 55
Internal echo of the imperfect sound;

To both I listened, drawing from them
both

A cheerful confidence in things to come. 58

Content and not unwilling now to give
A respite to this passion, I paced on 60

With brisk and eager steps; and came,
at length,

To a green shady place, where down I
sate

Beneath a tree, slackening my thoughts
by choice,

And settling into gentler happiness.
Twas autumn, and a clear and placid day,

With warmth, as much as needed, from a
sun 66

Two hours declined towards the west;
a day

With silver clouds, and sunshine on the
grass,

And in the sheltered and the sheltering
grove

A perfect stillness. Many were the
thoughts 70

Encouraged and dismissed, till choice
was made

Of a known Vale, whither my feet should
turn,

Nor till they had reached the very
 Of the ~~late~~ cottage which methought I

^{saw}
 No picture of ~~there~~ memory ever looked

So fair; and while upon the fancied scene
 I gazed with growing love, a higher power

Than Fancy gave assurance of some work
 Of glory there forthwith to be begun.

~~Perhaps too there performed.~~ Thus long
 I mused,

Nor e'er lost sight of what I mused upon,
~~Soon~~ when, amid the stately grove of oaks,

Now here, now there, an acorn, from its
 cap

~~Dislodged,~~ through sere leaves rustled, or
 at once

To the bare earth dropped with a start-
 ling sound.

From that soft couch I rose not, till the
 sun

Had almost touched the horizon; casting
 then

A backward glance upon the curling
 cloud

Of city smoke, by distance ruralised;
 Keen as a Truant or a Fugitive,

But as a Pilgrim resolute, I took,
 Even with the chance equipment of that

hour,
 The road that pointed toward the chosen

Vale.
 It was a splendid evening, and my soul

Once more made trial of her strength,
 nor lacked

Æolian visitations; but the harp
 Was soon defrauded, and the banded

host
 Of harmony dispersed in straggling

sounds,
 And lastly utter silence! 'Be it so;

Why think of anything but present
 good?"

So, like a home-bound labourer, I pursued
 My way beneath the mellowing sun, that

shed
 Mild influence; nor left in me one wish

Again to bend the Sabbath of that time
 To a servile yoke. What need of many

words?
 A pleasant loitering journey, through

three days
 Continued, brought me to my hermitage,

I spare to tell of what ensued, the life
 In common things—the endless store of

things,
 Rare, or at least so seeming, every day

Found all about me in one neighbour-
 hood—

The self-congratulation, and, from morn
 To night, unbroken cheerfulness serene.

But speedily an earnest longing rose
 To brace myself to some determined aim,

Reading or thinking; either to lay up

New stores, or rescue from decay the old
 By timely interference: and therewith

Came hopes still higher, that with out-
 ward life

I might endure some airy phantasies
 That had been floating loose about for

years,
 And to such beings temperately deal

forth
 The many feelings that oppressed my

heart.
 That hope hath been discouraged; wel-

come light
 Dawns from the east, but dawns to dis-

appear
 And mock me with a sky that ripens not

Into a steady morning: if my mind,
 Remembering the bold promise of the

past,
 Would gladly grapple with some noble

theme,
 Vain is her wish; where'er she turns she

finds
 Impediments from day to day renewed.

And now it would content me to yield
 up

Those lofty hopes awhile, for present
 gifts

Of humbler industry. But, oh, dear
 Friend!

The Poet, gentle creature as he is,
 Hath, like the Lover, his unruly times;

His fits when he is neither sick nor well,
 Though no distress be near him but his

own
 Unmanageable thoughts: his mind, best

pleased
 While she as duteous as the mother dove

Sits brooding, lives not always to that
 end,

But like the innocent bird, hath goadings
 on

That drive her as in trouble through the
 groves;

With me is now such passion, to be
 blamed

No otherwise than as it lasts too long.

When, as becomes a man who would
 prepare

For such an arduous work, I through
 myself

Make rigorous inquisition, the report
 Is often cheering; for I neither seem

To lack that first great gift, the vital soul,
 Nor general truths, which are them-

selves a sort
 Of Elements and Agents, Under-powers,

Subordinate helpers of the living mind:
 Nor am I naked of external things,

Forms, images, nor numerous other aids
 Of less regard, though won perhaps with

toll

And needful to build up a Poet's praise,
Time, place, and manners do I seek, and
these

Are found in plenteous store, but nowhere
such 159

As may be singled out with steady choice;
No little band of yet remembered names
Whom I, in perfect confidence, might
hope

To summon back from lonesome banish-
ment,

And make them dwellers in the hearts of
men

Now living, or to live in future years. 165
Sometimes the ambitious Power of choice,
mistaking

Proud spring-tide swellings for a regular
sea,

Will settle on some British theme, some
old

Romantic tale by Milton left unsung;
More often turning to some gentle place

Within the groves of Chivalry, I pipe 171
To shepherd swains, or seated harp in
hand,

Amid reposing knights by a river side
Or fountain, listen to the grave reports

Of dire enchantments faced and over-
come 175

By the strong mind, and tales of warlike
feats,

Where spear encountered spear, and
sword with sword

Fought, as if conscious of the blazonry
That the shield bore, so glorious was the
strife;

Whence inspiration for a song that winds
Through ever-changing scenes of votive
quest 181

Wrongs to redress, harmonious tribute
paid

To patient courage and unblemished
truth,

To firm devotion, zeal unquenchable,
And Christian meekness hallowing faith-
ful loves. 185

Sometimes, more sternly moved, I would
relate

How vanquished Mithridates northward
passed,

And, hidden in the cloud of years, became
Odin, the Father of a race by whom

Perished the Roman Empire: how the
friends 190

And followers of Sertorius, out of Spain
Flying, found shelter in the Fortunate
Isles,

And left their usages, their arts and laws,
To disappear by a slow gradual death,

To dwindle and to perish one by one, 195
Starved in those narrow bounds: but
not the soul

Of Liberty, which fifteen hundred years
Survived, and, when the European came

With skill and power that might not be
withstood,

Did, like a pestilence, maintain its hold
And wasted down by glorious death that
race 201

Of natural heroes: or I would record
How, in tyrannic times, some high-souled
man,

Unnamed among the chronicles of kings,
Suffered in silence for Truth's sake; or
tell, 205

How that one Frenchman,¹ through con-
tinued force

Of meditation on the inhuman deeds
Of those who conquered first the Indian
Isles,

Went single in his ministry across 209
The Ocean; not to comfort the oppressed,
But, like a thirsty wind, to roam about

Withering the Oppressor: how Gustavus
sought

Help at his need in Dalecarlia's mines:
How Wallace fought for Scotland; left
the name

Of Wallace to be found, like a wild flower,
All over his dear Country; left the
deeds 216

Of Wallace, like a family of Ghosts,
To people the steep rocks and river banks,

Her natural sanctuaries, with a local soul
Of independence and stern liberty. 220

Sometimes it suits me better to invent
A tale from my own heart, more near akin
To my own passions and habitual
thoughts;

Some variegated story, in the main
Lofty, but the unsubstantial structure
melts 225

Before the very sun that brightens it,
Mist into air dissolving! Then a wish,
My last and favourite aspiration, mounts

With yearning toward some philosophic
song

Of Truth that cherishes our daily life; 230
With meditations passionate from deep
Recesses in man's heart, immortal verse

Thoughtfully fitted to the Orphean lyre;
But from this awful burthen I full soon
Take refuge and beguile myself with
trifles

That mellow years will bring a ripener
And clearer insight. Thus my days are
past 235

In contradiction; with no skill to part
Vague longing, haply bred by want of
power,

From paramount impulse not to be with-
stood, 240

A timorous capacity from prudence,
From circumspection, infinite delay. X

¹ Dominique de Gourgues, who in 1567 sailed to
Florida to avenge the massacre of the French by the
Spaniards.—Ed. of 1850.

THE PRELUDE

BOOK I

Humility and modest awe themselves
Betray me, serving often for a cloak 244
To a more subtle selfishness; that now
Locks every function up in blank reserve,
Now dupes me, trusting to an anxious
eye

That with intrusive restlessness beats off
Simplicity and self-presented truth.
Ah! better far than this, to stray about
Voluptuously through fields and rural
walks, 251

And ask no record of the hours, resigned
To vacant musing, unproved neglect
Of all things, and deliberate holiday. 254
Far better never to have heard the name
Of zeal and just ambition, than to live
Baffled and plagued by a mind that every
hour

Turns recreant to her task; takes heart
again,

Then feels immediately some hollow
thought

Hang like an interdict upon her hopes.
This is my lot; for either still I find 261
Some imperfection in the chosen theme,
Or see of absolute accomplishment
Much wanting, to much wanting, in my-
self, 262

That I recoil and droop, and seek repose
In listlessness from vain perplexity, 266
Unprofitably travelling toward the grave,
Like a false steward who hath much
received

And renders nothing back.

Was it for this
That one, the fairest of all rivers, loved
To blend his murmurs with my nurse's
song, 271

And, from his alder shades and rocky falls,
And from his fords and shallows, sent a
voice

That flowed along my dreams? For this,
diddst thou, 274

O Derwent! winding among grassy holms
Where I was looking on, a babe in arms,
Make ceaseless music that composed my
thoughts

To more than infant softness, giving me
Amid the fretful dwellings of mankind
A foretaste, a dim earnest, of the calm
That Nature breathes among the hills
and groves. 281

When he had left the mountains and
received

On his smooth breast the shadow of those
towers

That yet survive, a shattered monument
Of feudal sway, the bright blue river
passed 285

Along the margin of our terrace walk;
A tempting playmate whom we dearly
loved.

Oh, many a time have I, a five years' child,

In a small mill-race, severed from his
stream,

Made one long bathing of a summer's
day; 290

Basked in the sun, and plunged and
basked again

Alternate, all a summer's day, or scoured
The sandy fields, leaping through flowery
groves

Of yellow ragwort; or when rock and
hill,

The woods, and distant Skiddaw's lofty
height, 295

Were bronzed with deepest radiance,
stood alone

Beneath the sky, as if I had been born
On Indian plains, and from my mother's
hut

Had run abroad in wantonness, to sport,
A naked savage, in the thunder shower.

Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew
up 301

Fostered alike by beauty and by fear:
Much favoured in my birthplace, and no
less

In that beloved Vale to which erelong
We were transplanted—there, were we let
loose 305

For sports of wider range. Ere I had
told

Ten birth-days, when among the
mountain-slopes

Frost, and the breath of frosty wind, had
snapped

The last autumnal crocus, 'twas my joy
With store of springes o'er my shoulder
hung, 310

To range the open heights where wood-
cocks run

Among the smooth green turf. Through
half the night,

Suadding away from snare to snare, I
plied

That anxious visitation;—moon and stars
Were shining o'er my head. (I was alone,
And seemed to be a trouble to the peace
That dwelt among them.) Sometimes it
befell 317

In these night wanderings, that a strong
desire 320

O'erpowered my better reason, and the
bird

Which was the captive of another's toil
Became my prey; and when the deed was
done 321

I heard among the solitary hills
low breathings coming after me, and
sounds

Of undistinguishable motion, steps
Almost as silent as the turf they trod. 325

Nor less when spring had warmed the
cultured Vale,

Roved we as plunderers where the mother-bird

Had in high places built her lodge; though mean

Our object and inglorious, yet the end Was not ignoble. Oh! when I have hung Above the raven's nest, by knots of grass And half-inch fissures in the slippery rock

But ill sustained, and almost (so it seemed)

Suspended by the blast that blew amain, Shouldering the naked crag, oh, at that time

While on the perilous ridge I hung alone, With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind

Blow through my ear! the sky seemed not a sky

Of earth—and with what motion moved the clouds!

Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows like harmony in music; there is a dark, inscrutable workmanship that reconciles discordant elements, makes them cling together

In one society. How strange that all The terrors, pains, and early miseries, 345 Regrets, vexations, lassitudes interposed Within my mind, should e'er have borne a part,

And that a needful part, in making up The calm existence that is mine when I Am worthy of myself! Praise to the end! Thanks to the means which Nature deigned to employ; 351

Whether her fearless visitings, or those That came with soft alarm, like hurtless light

Opening the peaceful clouds; or she may use

Severer interventions, ministry 355 More palpable, as best might suit her aim.

One summer evening (led by her) I found

A little boat tied to a willow tree Within a rocky cave, its usual home.

Straight I unloosed her chain, and stepping in 360

Pushed from the shore. It was an act of stealth

And troubled pleasure, nor without the voice

Of mountain-echoes did my boat move on; Leaving behind her still, on either side, Small circles glittering idly in the moon, Until they melted all into one track 366 Of sparkling light. But now, like one who rows,

Proud of his skill, to reach a chosen point With an unswerving line, I fixed my view Upon the summit of a craggy ridge, 370

CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL-TIME

The horizon's utmost boundary; far above

Was nothing but the stars and the grey of a sky.

She was an elfin pinnace; lustily I dipped my oars into the silent lake, And, as I rose upon the stroke, my boat Went heaving through the water like a swan; 376

When, from behind that craggy steep till then

The horizon's bound, a huge peak, black and huge,

As if with voluntary power instinct Upreared its head. I struck and struck again, 380

And growing still in stature the grim shape

Towered up between me and the stars, and still,

For so it seemed, with purpose of its own And measured motion like a living thing,

Strode after me, With trembling oars I turned, 385

And through the silent water stole my way

Back to the covert of the willow tree; There in her mooring-place I left my bark,

And through the meadows homeward went, in grave 389

And serious mood; but after I had seen That spectacle, for many days, my brain

Worked with a dim and undetermined sense

Of unknown modes of being; o'er my thoughts 393

There hung a darkness, call it solitude Or blank desertion. No familiar shapes

Remained, no pleasant images of trees, Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields;

But huge and mighty forms, that do not live

Like living men, moved slowly through the mind

By day, and were a trouble to my dreams.

Wisdom and Spirit of the universe! 401

Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought, That givest to forms and images a breath

And everlasting motion, not in vain By day or star-light thus from my first dawn 405

Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me The passions that build up our human soul,

Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,

But with high objects, with enduring things

With life and nature—purifying thus 410

The elements of feeling and of thought, And sanctifying, by such discipline,

Both pain and fear, until we recognise

A grandeur in the bosom of the heart.
 Not was this resplendent vouchsafed to me
 With stunted kindness. In November
 days, 416
 When vapours rolling down the valley
 made
 A lonely scene more lonesome, among
 woods,
 At noon and 'mid the calm of summer
 nights,
 When, by the margin of the trembling
 lake, 420
 Beneath the gloomy hills homeward I
 went
 In solitude, such intercourse was mine;
 Mine was it in the fields both day and
 night,
 And by the waters, all the summer long.

And in the frosty season, when the sun
 Was set, and visible for many a mile 426
 The cottage windows blazed through
 twilight gloom,
 I heeded not their summons: happy time
 It was indeed for all of us—for me
 It was a time of rapture! Clear and loud
 The village clock tolled six,—I wheeled
 about, 431
 Proud and exulting like an untired horse
 That cares not for his home. All shod
 with steel,
 We hissed along the polished ice in games
 Confederate, imitative of the chase: 435
 And woodland pleasures,—the resound-
 ing horn,
 The pack loud chiming, and the hunted
 hare.
 So through the darkness and the cold we
 flew,
 And not a voice was idle; with the din
 Smitten, the precipices rang aloud; 440
 The leafless trees and every icy crag
 Tinkled like iron; while far distant hills
 Into the tumult sent an alien sound
 Of melancholy not unnoticed; while the
 stars
 Eastward were sparkling clear, and in the
 west 445
 The orange sky of evening died away.
 Not seldom from the uproar I retired
 Into a silent bay, or sportively
 Glanced sideways, leaving the tumultuous
 throng,
 To cut across the reflex of a star 450
 That fled, and, flying still before me,
 gleamed
 Upon the glassy plain; and oftentimes,
 When we had given our bodies to the
 wind,
 And all the shadowy banks on either side
 Came sweeping through the darkness,
 spinning still 455
 The rapid line of motion, then at once
 Have I, reclining back upon my heels,

Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
 Wheeled by me—even as if the earth had
 rolled
 With visible motion her diurnal round!
 Behind me did they stretch in solemn
 train, 461
 Feebler and feebler, and I stood and
 watched
 Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep.

Ye Presences of Nature in the sky panth
 And on the earth! Ye Visions of the
 hills! 465
 And Souls of lonely places! can I think
 A vulgar hope was yours when ye em-
 ployed
 Such ministry, when ye through many
 a year
 Haunting me thus among my boyish
 sports,
 On caves and trees, upon the woods and
 hills, 470
 Impressed upon all forms the characters
 Of danger or desire; and thus did make
 The surface of the universal earth
 With triumph and delight, with hope and
 fear,
 Work like a sea?

Not uselessly employed,
 Might I pursue this theme through every
 change 476
 Of exercise and play, to which the year
 Did summon us in his delightful round.
 "We were a noisy crew; the sun in
 heaven
 Beheld not vales more beautiful than
 ours; 480
 Nor saw a band in happiness and joy
 Richer, or worthier of the ground they
 trod.
 I could record with no reluctant voice
 The woods of autumn, and their hazel
 bowers
 With milk-white clusters hung; the rod
 and line, 485
 True symbol of hope's foolishness, whose
 strong
 And unproved enchantment led us on
 By rocks and pools shut out from every
 star,
 All the green summer, to forlorn cascades
 Among the windings hid of mountain
 brooks. 490
 —Unfading recollections! at this hour
 The heart is almost mine with which I
 felt,
 From some hill-top on sunny afternoons,
 The paper kite high among fleecy clouds
 Pull at her rein like an impetuous courser;
 Or, from the meadows sent on gusty
 days, 496
 Beheld her breast the wind, then suddenly
 Dashed headlong, and rejected by the
 storm.

Ye lowly cottages wherein we dwelt,
A ministration of your own was yours;
Can I forget you, being as you were 502
So beautiful among the pleasant fields
In which ye stood? or can I here forget
The plain and seemly countenance with
which

Ye dealt out your plain comforts? Yet
had ye ~~under your~~ 505
Delights and exultations of your own.
Eager and never weary we pursued
Our home-amusements by the warm peat-
fire

At evening, when with pencil, and smooth
slate

In square divisions parcelled out and all
With crosses and with cyphers scribbled
o'er, 511

We schemed and puzzled, head opposed
to head

In strife too humble to be named in verse:
Or round the naked table, snow-white
deal,

Cherry or maple, sate in close array 515
And to the combat, Loo or Whist, led on
A thick-ribbed army; not, as in the world,
Neglected and ungratefully thrown by
Even for the very service they had
brought.

But husbanded through many a long
campaign. 520

Uncouth assemblage was it, where no few
Had changed their functions; some,
plebeian cards

Which Fate, beyond the promise of their
birth,

Had dignified, and called to represent
The persons of departed potentates, 525
Oh, with what echoes on the board they
fell!

Ironic diamonds,—clubs, hearts, dia-
monds, spades,

A congregation piteously akin!
Cheap matter offered they to boyish wit,
Those sooty knaves, precipitated down
With scoffs and taunts, like Vulcan out
of heaven: 531

The paramount ace, a moon in her eclipse,
Queens gleaming through their splen-
dour's last decay,

And monarchs surly at the wrongs sus-
tained

By royal visages. (Meanwhile abroad 535
Incessant rain was falling, or the frost
Raged bitterly, with keen and silent tooth;
And, interrupting oft that eager game,
From under Esthwaite's splitting fields of
ice

The pent-up air, struggling to free itself,
Gave out to meadow-grounds and hills a
loud 541

Protracted yelling, like the noise of
wolves

Howling in troops along the Bothnic Main.

CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL-TIME

Nor, ~~sedulous~~ as I have been to trace
How Nature by extrinsic passion first 542
Peopled the mind with forms sublime or
fair,

And made me love them, may I here omit
How other pleasures have been mine, and
joys

Of subtler origin; how I have felt,
Not seldom even in that tempestuous time,
Those hallowed and pure motions of the
sense 551

Which seem, in their simplicity, to own
An intellectual charm; that calm delight
Which, if I err not, surely must belong
To those first-born affections that fit 555
Our new existence to existing things,
And, in our dawn of being, constitute
The bond of union between life and joy.

Yes, I remember when the changeful
earth,
And ~~twice five summers~~ on my mind had
stamped 560

The faces of the moving year, even then
I held unconscious intercourse with beauty
Old as creation, drinking in a pure
Organic pleasure from the silver wreaths
Of curling mist, or from the level plain 565
Of waters coloured by impending clouds.

The sands of Westmoreland, the creeks
and bays

Of Cumbria's rocky limits, they can tell
How, when the Sea threw off his evening
shade 569

And to the shepherd's hut on distant hills
Sent welcome notice of the rising moon,
How I have stood, to fancies such as these
A stranger, linking with the spectacle 573
No conscious memory of a kindred sight,
And bringing with me no peculiar sense
Of quietness or peace; yet have I stood,
Even while mine eye hath moved o'er
many a league

Of shining water, gathering as it seemed,
Through every hair-breadth in that field
of light, 579
New pleasure like a bee among the flowers.

Thus oft amid those fits of vulgar joy
Which, through all seasons, on a child's
pursuits

Are prompt attendants, 'mid that giddy
bliss

Which, like a tempest, works along the
blood

And is forgotten; even then I felt 585
Gleams like the flashing of a shield,—the

common face of Nature spake to me
Rememberable things; sometimes, as
true,

By chance collisions and quaint accidents
(Like those ill-sorted unions, work sup-
posed 590

Of self-minded fancies, yet not vain
 Nor selfless. It haply they impressed
 Concrete objects and appearances, 593
 Albeit selfless then, and doomed to sleep
 Until maturer seasons called them forth
 To impregnate and to elevate the mind.
 —And if the vulgar joy by its own weight
 Wore itself out of the memory,
 The scenes which were a witness of that
 joy

Remained in their substantial lineaments
 Depicted on the brain, and to the eye 601
 Were visible, a daily sight; and thus
 By the impressive discipline of fear,
 By pleasure and repeated happiness,
 So frequently repeated, and by force 605
 Of obscure feelings representative
 Of things forgotten, these same scenes so
 bright,

So beautiful, so majestic in themselves,
 Though yet the day was distant, did
 become

Habitually dear, and all their forms 610
 And changeful colours by invisible links
 Were fastened to the affections.

I began
 My story early—not misled, I trust,
 By an infirmity of love for days
 Disowned by memory—were the breath of
 spring 615

Planting my snowdrops among winter
 snows:

Nor will it seem to thee, O Friend! so
 prompt

In sympathy, that I have lengthened out
 With fond and feeble tongue a tedious tale.
 Meanwhile, my hope has been, that I
 might fetch 620

Invigorating thoughts from former years;
 Might fix the wavering balance of my
 mind,

And haply meet reproaches too, whose
 power

May spur me on, in manhood now
 mature,

To honourable toil. Yet should these
 hopes 625

Prove vain, and thus should neither I be
 taught

To understand myself, nor thou to know
 With better knowledge how the heart

was framed
 Of him thou lovest; need I dread from
 thee

Harsh judgments, if the song be loth to
 quit 630

Those recollected hours that have the
 charm

Of visionary things, those lovely forms
 And sweet sensations that throw back

our life,
 And almost make remotest infancy

A visible scene, on which the sun is
 shining? 635

One end at least hath been attained; my
 mind

Hath been revived, and if this genial mood
 Desert me not, forthwith shall be brought

down
 Through later years the story of my life.

The road lies plain before me;—'tis a
 theme 640

Single and of determined bounds; and
 hence

I choose it rather at this time, than work
 Of ampler or more varied argument,

Where I might be discomfited and lost:
 And certain hopes are with me, that to
 thee 645

This labour will be welcome, honoured
 Friend!

BOOK SECOND

SCHOOL-TIME (continued)

Thus far, O Friend! have we, though
 leaving much

Unvisited, endeavoured to retrace
 The simple ways in which my childhood

walked;
 Those chiefly that first led me to the love

Of rivers, woods, and fields. The passion
 yet 5

Was in its birth, sustained as might befall
 By nourishment that came unsought; for

still
 From week to week, from month to

month, we lived
 A round of tumult. Duly were our games

Prolonged in summer till the day-light
 failed: 10

No chair remained before the doors; the
 bench

And threshold steps were empty; fast
 asleep

The labourer, and the old man who had
 sate

A later lingerer; yet the revelry
 Continued and the loud uproar: at last,

When all the ground was dark, and
 twinkling stars 16

Edged the black clouds, home and to bed
 we went,

Feverish with weary joints and beating
 minds.

(Ah! is there one who ever has been
 young,

Nor needs a warning voice to tame the pride

Of intellect and virtue's self-esteem? } 20
One is there, though the wisest and the best

Of all mankind, who covets not at times
Union that cannot be;—who would not give,

If so he might, to duty and to truth 25
The eagerness of infantine desire?

A tranquillising spirit presses now
On my corporeal frame, so wide appears
The vacancy between me and those days
Which yet have such self-presence in my mind, 30

That, musing on them, often do I seem
Two consciousnesses, conscious of myself
And of some other Being. A rude mass
Of native rock, left midway in the square
Of our small market village, was the goal

Or centre of these sports; and when, returned 36

After long absence, thither I repaired,
Gone was the old grey stone, and in its place

A smart Assembly-room usurped the ground

That had been ours. There let the fiddle scream, 40

And be ye happy! Yet, my Friends! I know

That more than one of you will think with me

Of those soft starry nights, and that old Dame Rowe

From whom the stone was named, who there had sate,

And watched her table with its huckster's wares 45

Assiduous, through the length of sixty years.

✓ We ran a boisterous course; the year span round

With giddy motion. But the time approached

That brought with it a regular desire
For calmer pleasures, when the winning forms 50

Of Nature were collaterally attached
To every scheme of holiday delight

And every boyish sport, less grateful else
And languidly pursued.

When summer came,
Our pastime was, on bright half-holidays,

To sweep along the plain of Windermere
With rival oars; and the selected bourne

Was now an Island musical with birds
That sang and ceased not; now a Sister Isle

Beneath the oaks' umbrageous covert, sown 60

With lilies of the valley like a field;

And now a third small Island, where survived

In solitude the ruins of a shrine
Once to Our Lady dedicate, and served

Daily with chaunted rites. In such a race 65

So ended, disappointment could be none,
Uneasiness, or pain, or jealousy:

We rested in the shade, all pleased alike,
Conquered and conqueror. Thus the pride of strength, 70

And the vain-glory of superior skill,
Were tempered; thus was gradually produced

A quiet independence of the heart;
And to my Friend who knows me I may add,

Fearless of blame, that hence for future days

Ensued a diffidence and modesty, 75

And I was taught to feel, perhaps too much,

The self-sufficing power of Solitude. ✓

Our daily meals were frugal, Sabine fare!

More than we wished we knew the blessing then

Of vigorous hunger—hence corporeal strength 80

Unsnapped by delicate viands; for, exclude
A little weekly stipend, and we lived

Through three divisions of the quartered year

In penniless poverty. But now to school
From the half-yearly holidays returned,

We came with weightier purses, that sufficed 86

To furnish treats more costly than the Dame

Of the old grey stone, from her scant board, supplied.

Hence rustic dinners on the cool green ground,

Or in the woods, or by a river side 90

Or shady fountain, while among the leaves

Soft airs were stirring, and the mid-day sun
Unfelt shone brightly round us in our joy.

Nor is my aim neglected if I tell
How sometimes, in the length of those half-years, 95

We from our funds drew largely;—proud to curb,

And eager to spur on, the galloping steed;
And with the cautious inn-keeper, whose stud

Supplied our want, we haply might employ

Sly subterfuge, if the adventure's bound
Were distant: some famed temple where

of yore 101

The Druids worshipped, or the antique walls

Of the large abbey, where within the
 Vale
 Of Nightshade, to St. Mary's honour
 built,
 Stands yet a mouldering pile with fractured arch,
 105
 Belfry, and images, and living trees;
 A holy scene!—Along the smooth green
 turf
 Our horses grazed. To more than inland
 peace,
 Left by the west wind sweeping overhead
 From a tumultuous ocean, trees and
 towers
 110
 In that sequestered valley may be seen,
 Both silent and both motionless alike;
 Such the deep shelter that is there, and
 such
 The safeguard for repose and quietness.
 ✓ Our steeds remounted and the summons
 given,
 115
 With whip and spur we through the
 chauntry flew
 In uncouth race, and left the cross-legged
 knight,
 And the stone-abbot, and that single
 wren
 Which one day sang so sweetly in the
 nave
 Of the old church, that—though from
 recent showers
 120
 The earth was comfortless, and, touched
 by faint
 Internal breezes, sobbings of the place
 And respirations, from the roofless walls
 The shuddering ivy dripped large drops—
 yet still
 So sweetly 'mid the gloom the invisible
 bird
 125
 Sang to herself, that there I could have
 made
 My dwelling-place, and lived for ever
 there
 To hear such music: Through the walls
 we flew
 And down the valley, and, a circuit made
 In wantonness of heart, through rough
 and smooth
 130
 We scampered homewards. Oh, ye rocks
 and streams,
 And that still spirit shed from evening
 air!
 Even in this joyous time I sometimes felt
 Your presence, when with slackened step
 we breathed
 Along the sides of the steep hills, or when
 Lighted by gleams of moonlight from the
 sea
 136
 We beat with thundering hoofs the level
 sand.
 Midway on long Winander's eastern
 shore,
 Within the crescent of a pleasant bay,

A tavern stood; no homely-featured
 house,
 140
 Primeval like its neighbouring cottages,
 But 'twas a splendid place, the door beset
 With chaises, grooms, and liveries, and
 within
 Decanters, glasses, and the blood-red
 wine.
 In ancient times, or ere the Hall was
 built
 145
 On the large island, had this dwelling been
 More worthy of a poet's love, a hut,
 Proud of its one bright fire and sycamore
 shade.
 But—though the rhymes were gone that
 once inscribed
 The threshold, and large golden charac-
 ters,
 150
 Spread o'er the spangled sign-board, had
 dislodged
 The old Lion and usurped his place, in
 slight
 And mockery of the rustic painter's
 hand—
 Yet, to this hour, the spot to me is dear
 With all its foolish pomp. The garden
 lay
 155
 Upon a slope surmounted by a plain
 Of a small bowling-green; beneath us
 stood
 A grove, with gleams of water through
 the trees
 And over the tree-tops; nor did we want
 Refreshment, strawberries and mellow
 cream.
 160
 There, while through half an afternoon
 we played
 On the smooth platform, whether skill
 prevailed
 Or happy blunder triumphed, bursts of
 glee
 Made all the mountains ring. But, ere
 nightfall,
 When in our pinnace we returned at
 leisure
 165
 Over the shadowy lake, and to the beach
 Of some small island steered our course
 with one,
 The Minstrel of the Troop, and left him
 there,
 And rowed off gently, while he blew his
 flute
 169
 Alone upon the rock—oh, then, the calm
 And dead still water lay upon my mind
 Even with a weight of pleasure, and the
 sky,
 Never before so beautiful, sank down
 Into my heart, and held me like a dream.
 Thus were my sympathies enlarged, and
 thus
 175
 Daily the common range of visible things
 Grew dear to me: already I began
 To love the sun; a boy I loved the sun,
 Not as I since have loved him, as a pledge

And surety of our earthly life, a light 180
Which we behold and feel we are alive;
Nor for his bounty to so many worlds—
But for this cause, that I had seen him

lay
His Beauty on the morning hills, had seen
The western mountain touch his setting
orb, 185
In many a thoughtless hour, when, from
excess

Of happiness, my blood appeared to flow
For its own pleasure, and I breathed with
joy.

And, from like feelings, humble though
intense,

To patriotic and domestic love 190

Analogous, the moon to me was dear;

For I could dream away my purposes,

Standing to gaze upon her while she hung

Midway between the hills, as if she knew

No other region, but belonged to thee, 195

Yea, appertained by a peculiar right

To thee and thy grey huts, thou one dear

Vale!

Those incidental charms which first
attached

My heart to rural objects, day by day

Grew weaker, and I hasten on to tell 200

How Nature, intervenient till this time

And secondary, now at length was sought

For her own sake. But who shall parcel

out

His intellect by geometric rules,

Split like a province into round and

square? 205

Who knows the individual hour in which

His habits were first sown, even as a seed?

Who that shall point as with a wand and

say

'This portion of the river of my mind

Came from yon fountain?' Thou, my

Friend! art one 210

More deeply read in thy own thoughts;

to thee

Science appears but what in truth she is,

Not as our glory and our absolute boast,

But as a succedaneum, and a prop

To our infirmity. No officious slave 215

Art thou of that false secondary power

By which we multiply distinctions, then

Deem that our puny boundaries are things

That we perceive, and not that we have

made.

To thee, unblinded by these formal arts,

The unity of all hath been revealed, 221

And thou wilt doubt, with me less aptly

skilled

Than many are to range the faculties

In scale and order; class the cabinet

Of their sensations, and in voluble phrase

Run through the history and birth of

each 226

As of a single independent thing.

Hard task, vain hope, to analyse the
mind,

If each most obvious and particular
thought,

Not in a mystical and idle sense, 230

But in the words of Reason deeply

weighed,

Hath no beginning.

Blest the infant Babe,

(For with my best conjecture I would

trace

Our Being's earthly progress,) blest the

Babe,

Nursed in his Mother's arms, who sinks

to sleep, 235

Rocked on his Mother's breast; who with

his soul

Drinks in the feelings of his Mother's

eye!

For him, in one dear Presence, there

exists

A virtue which irradiates and exalts

Objects through widest intercourse of

sense. 240

No outcast he, bewildered and depressed:

Along his infant veins are interwoven

The gravitation and the filial bond 245

Of nature that connect him with the

world.

Is there a flower, to which he points with

hand 245

Too weak to gather it, already love

Drawn from love's purest earthly fount

for him

Hath beautified that flower; already

shades

Of pity cast from inward tenderness

Do fall around him upon aught that bears

Unsightly marks of violence or harm. 251

Emphatically such a Being lives,

From creature as he is, helpless as frail,

An inmate of this active universe:

For feeling has to him imparted power

That through the growing faculties of

sense 256

Doth like an agent of the one great Mind

Create, creator and receiver both,

Working but in alliance with the works

Which it beholds.—Such, verily, is the

first 260

Poetic spirit of our human life,

By uniform control of after years,

In most, abated or suppressed; in some,

Through every change of growth and of

decay,

Pre-eminent till death.

From early days, 265

Beginning not long after that first time

In which, a Babe, by intercourse of touch

I held mute dialogues with my Mother's

heart,

I have endeavoured to display the means

Whereby this infant sensibility, 270

Great birthright of our being, was in me

and sustained. Yet is a path
 difficult before me; and I fear
 that in its broken windings we shall need
 The chamois' sinews, and the eagle's
 wing:

For now a trouble came into my mind
From unknown causes. I was left alone
Seeking the visible world, nor knowing
why.

The props of my affections were removed,
And yet the building stood, as if sustained
By its own spirit! All that I beheld 281
Was dear, and hence to finer influxes

The mind lay open, to a more exact
And close communion. Many are our
joys

In youth, but oh! what happiness to live
When every hour brings palpable access
Of knowledge, when all knowledge is
delight.

And sorrow is not there! The seasons
came.

And every season wheresoe'er I moved
Unfolded transitory qualities, 290
Which, but for this most watchful power
of love.

Had been neglected; left a register
Of permanent relations, else unknown.
Hence life, and change, and beauty, soli-
tude

More active even than 'best society'—
Society made sweet as solitude 296
By silent inobtrusive sympathies.

And gentle agitations of the mind
From manifold distinctions, difference
Perceived in things, where, to the un-
watchful eye, 300

No difference is, and hence, from the same source.

Sublimar joy; for I would walk alone,
Under the quiet stars, and at that time
Have felt whate'er there is of power in
sound

To breathe an elevated mood, by form
Or image unprofaned; and I would stand,
If the night blackened with a coming
storm.

Beneath some rock, listening to notes
that are

The ghostly language of the ancient earth,
Or make their dim abode in distant
winds. 210

Thence did I drink the visionary power;
And deem not profitless those fleeting
moods

Of shadowy exultation: not for this,
That they are kindred to our purer mind
And intellectual life; but that the soul,
Remembering how she felt, but what she
felt 316

Remembering not, retains an obscure sense

Of possible sublimity, whereto
With growing faculties she doth aspire.

With faculties still growing, feeling still
That whatsoever point they gain, they
yet

Have something to pursue. And not alone.

'Mid gloom and tumult, but no less 'mid
fair

And tranquil scenes, that universal power
And fitness in the latent qualities 325
And essences of things, by which the mind

And essences of things, by which the mind
Is moved with feelings of delight, to me
Came strengthened with a superadded
soul ~~some emotion~~

A virtue not its own. My morning walks
Were early;—oft before the hours of
school

I travelled round our little lake, five miles

Of pleasant wandering. Happy time!
more dear

For this, that one was by my side, a
Friend!

Then passionately loved; with heart how full

Would he peruse these lines! For many

Have since flowed in between us, and,

Both silent to each other, at this time
We live as if these hours had never been

We live as if those hours had never been.
Nor seldom did I lift our cottage latch

Far earlier, ere one smoke-wreath had
risen 340

From human dwelling, or the vernal
thrush

Was audible; and sate among the woods
Alone upon some jutting eminence,

At the first gleam of dawn-light, when the
Vale,

Yet slumbering, lay in utter solitude. 345
How shall I seek the origin? where find

Faith in the marvellous things which then I felt?

Oft in these moments such a holy calm
Would overspread my soul, that bodily

eyes
Were utterly forgotten, and what I saw

Appeared like something in myself, a
dream, I.O. 101-1-1351

A prospect in the mind.
I were long to tell

What spring and autumn, what the winter
snows,

And what the summer shade, what day
and night,

My first creative sensibility; 360
 That by the regular action of the world
 My soul was unsubdued. A plastic power
 Abode with me; a forming hand, at times
 Rebellious, acting in a devious mood;
 A local spirit of his own, at war 365
 With general tendency, but, for the most,
 Subservient strictly to external things
 With which it communed. An auxiliary
 light

Came from my mind, which on the setting
 sun

Bestowed new splendour; the melodious
 birds, 370

The fluttering breezes, fountains that run
 on

Murmuring so sweetly in themselves,
 obeyed

A like dominion, and the midnight storm
 Grew darker in the presence of my eye:
 Hence my obeisance, my devotion hence,
 And hence my transport.

(Nor should this, perchance,
 Pass unrecorded, that I still had loved
 The exercise and produce of a toil,
 Than analytic industry to me
 More pleasing, and whose character I
 deem 380

Is more poetic as resembling more
 Creative agency. The song would speak
 Of that interminable building reared
 By observation of affinities
 In objects where no brotherhood exists
 To passive minds. My seventeenth year
 was come; 386

And, whether from this habit rooted now
 So deeply in my mind, or from excess
 In the great social principle of life
 Coercing all things into sympathy, 390
 To unorganic natures were transferred
 My own enjoyments; or the power of
 truth

Coming in revelation, did converse
 With things that really are; I, at this time,
 Saw blessings spread around me like a sea.
 Thus while the days flew by, and years
 passed on, 396

From Nature and her overflowing soul
 I had received so much, that all my
 thoughts

Were steeped in feeling; I was only then
 Contented, when with bliss ineffable 400
 I felt the sentiment of Being spread
 O'er all that moves and all that seemeth
 still;

O'er all that, lost beyond the reach of
 thought

And human knowledge, to the human eye
 Invisible, yet liveth to the heart; 405

O'er all that leaps and runs, and shouts
 and sings,

Or beats the gladsome air; o'er all that
 glides

Beneath the wave, yea, in the wave itself,

And mighty depth of waters. Wonder not
 If high the transport, great the joy, I felt
 Communing in this sort through earth
 and heaven 411

With every form of creature, as it looked
 Towards the Uncreated with a counten-
 ance

Of adoration, with an eye of love. 414
 One song they sang, and it was audible,
 Most audible, then, when the fleshly ear,
 O'ercome by humblest prelude of that
 strain,

Forgot her functions, and slept undis-
 turbed.)

If this be error, and another faith
 Find easier access to the pious mind, 420
 Yet were I grossly destitute of all
 Those human sentiments that make this
 earth

So dear, if I should fail with grateful voice
 To speak of you, ye mountains, and ye
 lakes

And sounding cataracts, ye mists and
 winds 425

That dwell among the hills where I was
 born.

If in my youth I have been pure in heart,
 If, mingling with the world, I am content
 With my own modest pleasures, and have
 lived

With God and Nature communing, re-
 moved 430

From little enmities and low desires,
 The gift is yours; if in these times of fear
 This melancholy waste of hopes o'er-
 thrown,

If, 'mid indifference and apathy, 434
 And wicked exultation when good men

On every side fall off, we know not how,
 To selfishness, disguised in gentle names

Of peace and quiet and domestic love,
 Yet mingled not unwillingly with sneers

On visionary minds; if, in this time 440
 Of dereliction and dismay, I yet

Despair not of our nature, but retain
 A more than Roman confidence, a faith

That fails not, in all sorrow my support,
 The blessing of my life; the gift is yours,

Ye winds and sounding cataracts! 'tis
 yours, 446

Ye mountains! thine, O Nature! Thou
 hast fed

My lofty speculations; and in thee,
 For this uneasy heart of ours, I find

A never-failing principle of joy. 450
 And purest passion.

Thou, my Friend! wert reared
 In the great city, 'mid far other scenes;

But we, by different roads, at length have
 gained

The self-same bourne. And for this cause
 to thee

I speak, unapprehensive of contempt, 455

They haunted me of coward tongues,
And that silent language which so
on

In conversation between man and man
Blots from the human countenance all
trace

Of beauty and of love. For thou hast
sought 460

The truth in solitude, and, since the days
That gave thee liberty, full long desired,

To serve in Nature's temple, thou hast been
The most assiduous of her ministers; 464
In many things my brother, chiefly here
In this our deep devotion.

Fare thee well!
Health and the quiet of a healthful mind
Attend thee! seeking off her haunts of men,
And yet more often living with thyself,
And for thyself, so haply shall thy days
Be many, and a blessing to mankind. 471

BOOK THIRD

RESIDENCE AT CAMBRIDGE

It was a dreary morning when the wheels
Rolled over a wide plain o'erhung with
clouds,
And nothing cheered our way till first
we saw
The long-roofed chapel of King's College
lift

Turrets and pinnacles in answering files,
Extended high above a dusky grove. 6

Advancing, we espied upon the road
A student clothed in gown and tasselled
cap,

Striding along as if o'ertasked by Time,
Or covetous of exercise and air; 10
He passed—nor was I master of my eyes
Till he was left an arrow's flight behind.
As near and nearer to the spot we drew,
It seemed to suck us in with an eddy's
force.

Onward we drove beneath the Castle;
caught, 15

While crossing Magdalene Bridge, a
glimpse of Cam;
And at the Hoop alighted, famous Inn.

My spirit was up, my thoughts were
full of hope;
Some friends I had, acquaintances who
there

Seemed friends, poor simple schoolboys,
now hung round 20

With honour and importance: in a world
Of welcome faces up and down I roved;
Questions, directions, warnings and advice,
Flowed in upon me, from all sides; fresh
day 24

Of pride and pleasure! to myself I seemed
A man of business and expense, and went
From shop to shop about my own affairs,
To Tutor or to Tailor, as befell,
From street to street with loose and care-
less mind.

I was the Dreamer, they the Dream;
I roamed 30
Delighted through the motley spectacle;

Gowns grave, or gaudy, doctors, students,
streets,

Courts, cloisters, flocks of churches, gate-
ways, towers:

Migration strange for a stripling of the
hills,

A northern villager.

As if the change 35
Had waited on some Fairy's wand, at once
Behold me rich in monies, and attired
In splendid garb, with hose of silk, and
hair

Powdered like riny trees, when frost is
keen.

My lordly dressing-gown, I pass it by, 40
With other signs of manhood that sup-
plied

The lack of beard.—The weeks went
roundly on,

With invitations, suppers, and fruit,
Smooth housekeeping ~~were~~, and all
without

Liberal, and suiting gentleman's array. 45

The Evangelist St. John my patron was:
Three Gothic courts are his, and in the
first

Was my abiding-place, a nook obscure;
Right underneath, the College kitchens
made

A humming sound, less tuneable than
bees, 50

But hardly less industrious; with shrill
notes

Of sharp command and scolding inter-
mixed.

Near me hung Trinity's loquacious clock,
Who never let the quarters, night or day,
Slip by him unproclaimed, and told the
hours 55

Twice over with a male and female voice.
Her pealing organ was my neighbour too;
And from my pillow, looking forth by
light

Of moon or favouring stars, I could be-
hold

The antechapel where the statue stood 60
Of Newton with his prism and silent face,
The marble index of a mind for ever
Voyaging through strange seas of Thought,
alone.

Of College labours, of the Lecturer's
room
All studded round, as thick as chairs
could stand, 65

With loyal students faithful to their books,
Half-and-half idlers, hardy recusants,
And honest dunces—of important days,
Examinations, when the man was weighed
As in a balance! of excessive hopes, 70
Tremblings withal and commendable
fears.

Small jealousies, and triumphs good or
bad—

Let others that know more speak as they
know.

Such glory was but little sought by me,
And little won. Yet from the first crude
days 75

Of settling time in this untried abode,
I was disturbed at times by prudent
thoughts,

Wishing to hope without a hope, some
fears

About my future worldly maintenance,
And, more than all, a strangeness in the
mind, 80

A feeling that I was not for that hour,
Nor for that place. But wherefore be
cast down?

For (not to speak of Reason and her pure
Reflective acts to fix the moral law
Deep in the conscience, nor of Christian
Hope, 85

Bowing her head before her sister Faith
As one far mightier), hither I had come,
Bear witness Truth, endowed with holy
powers

And faculties, whether to work or feel.

Often when the dazzling show no longer new
Had ceased to dazzle, oftentimes did I quit
My comrades, leave the crowd, buildings
and groves,

And as I paced alone the level fields
Far from those lovely sights and sounds
sublime

With which I had been conversant, the
mind 95

Drooped not; but there into herself return-
ing,

With prompt rebound seemed fresh as
heretofore.

At least I more distinctly recognised

Her native instincts: let me dare to speak

A higher language, say that now I felt

What independent solaces were mine, 100

To mitigate the injurious sway of place
Or circumstance, how far soever changed

In youth, or to be changed in after years.

As if awakened, summoned, roused, con-
strained, 105

I looked for universal things; perused
The common countenance of earth and
sky:

Earth, nowhere unembellished by some
trace

Of that first Paradise whence man was
driven;

And sky, whose beauty and bounty are
expressed 110

By the proud name she bears—the name
of Heaven.

I called on both to teach me what they
might;

Or turning the mind in upon herself,
Pored, watched, expected, listened, spread
my thoughts

And spread them with a wider creeping;
felt 115

Incumbencies more awful, visitings
Of the Upholder of the tranquil soul,

That tolerates the indignities of Time,
And, from the centre of Eternity

All finite motions overruling, lives 120

In glory immutable. But peace! enough
Here to record that I was mounting now

To such community with highest truth—
A track pursuing, not untrod before,

From strict analogies by thought sup-
plied 125

Or consciousnesses not to be subdued.
To every natural form, rock, fruit, or
flower,

Even the loose stones that cover the high-
way,

I gave a moral life: I saw them feel,
Or linked them to some feeling: the great
mass 130

Lay bedded in a quickening soul, and all
That I beheld respired with inward mean-
ing.

Add that whate'er of Terror or of Love,
Or Beauty, Nature's daily face put on

From transitory passion, unto this 135

I was as sensitive as waters are
To the sky's influence; in a kindred mood

Of passion was obedient as a lute
That waits upon the touches of the wind.

Unknown, unthought of, yet I was most
rich— 140

I had a world about me—'twas my own;
I made it, for it only lived to me,

And to the God who sees into the heart.
Such sympathies, though rarely, were
betrayed 144

By outward gestures and by visible looks:
Some called it madness—so indeed it was,

If child-like fruitfulness in passing joy,
If steady moods of thoughtfulness

matured

To inspiration, sort with such a name;
If prophecy be madness; if things viewed

By poets in old time, and higher up 151

By the first men, earth's first inhabitants,
May, in these tutored days no more be
seen

With undisordered sight. But leaving this,
It was no madness, for the bodily eye 155
Amid my strongest workings evermore
Was searching out the lines of difference
As they lie hid in all external forms,
Near or remote, minute or vast; an eye
Which, from a tree, a stone, a withered
leaf, 160

To the broad ocean and the azure heavens
Spangled with kindred multitudes of
stars,

Could find no surface where its power
might sleep;

Which spake perpetual logic to my soul,
And by an unrelenting agency 165
Did bind my feelings even as in a chain.

And here, O Friend! have I retraced
my life

Up to an eminence, and told a tale
Of matters which not falsely may be
called

'The glory of my youth. Of genius,
power, 170

Creation and divinity itself
I have been speaking, for my theme has
been

What passed within me. Not of outward
things

Done visibly for other minds, words, signs,
Symbols or actions, but of my own heart
Have I been speaking, and my youthful
mind. 176

O Heavens! how awful is the might of
souls,

And what they do within themselves while
yet

The yoke of earth is new to them, the
world

Nothing but a wild field where they were
sown. 180

This is, in truth, heroic argument, *
This genuine prowess, which I wished to
touch

With hand however weak, but in the main
It lies far hidden from the reach of words.
Points have we all of us within our souls
Where all stand single; this I feel, and
make 186

Breathings for incommunicable powers;
But is not each a memory to himself?—
And, therefore, now that we must quit
this theme,

I am not heartless, for there's not a man
That lives who hath not known his god-
like hours, 191

And feels not what an empire we inherit
As natural beings in the strength of
Nature.

No more: for now into a populous
plain

We must descend. A Traveller I am, 195
Whose tale is only of himself; even so,
So be it, if the pure of heart be prompt
To follow, and if thou, my honoured
Friend!

Who in these thoughts art ever at my
side,
Support, as heretofore, my fainting steps.

It hath been told, that when the first
delight 201
That flashed upon me from this novel
show
Had failed, the mind returned into her-
self;

Yet true it is, that I had made a change
In climate, and my nature's outward coat
Changed also slowly and insensibly. 206
Full oft the quiet and exalted thoughts
Of loneliness gave way to empty noise
And superficial pastimes; now and then
Forced labour, and more frequently
forced hopes; 210

And, worst of all, a treasonable growth
Of indecisive judgments, that impaired
And shook the mind's simplicity.—And
yet

This was a gladsome time. Could I be-
hold—
Who, less insensible than sodden clay 215
In a sea-river's bed at ebb of tide,
Could have beheld,—with undelighted
heart,
So many happy youths, so wide and fair
A congregation in its budding-time
Of health, and hope, and beauty, all at
once 220
So many divers samples from the growth
Of life's sweet season—could have seen
unmoved
That miscellaneous garland of wild flowers
Decking the matron temples of a place
So famous through the world? To me, at
least, 225

It was a goodly prospect: for, in sooth,
Though I had learnt betimes to stand
unpropped,
And independent musings pleased me so
That spells seemed on me when I was
alone, 230
Yet could I only cleave to solitude
In lonely places; if a throng was near
That way I leaned by nature; for my
heart
Was social, and loved idleness and joy.

Not seeking those who might partici-
pate
My deeper pleasures (nay, I had not once,
Though not unused to mutter lonesome
songs, 236
Even with myself divided such delight,
Or looked that way for aught that might
be clothed
In human language), easily I passed

From the remembrances of better things,
And slipped into the ordinary works 241
Of careless youth, unburdened, un-
alarmed.

Caverns there were within my mind which
sun

Could never penetrate, yet did there not
Want store of leafy arbours where the
light 245

Might enter in at will. Companionships,
Friendships, acquaintances, were welcome
all.

We sauntered, played, or rioted; we
talked

Unprofitable talk at morning hours;
Drifted about along the streets and
walks, 250

Read lazily in trivial books, went forth
To gallop through the country in blind
zeal

Of senseless horsemanship, or on the
breast

Of Cam sailed boisterously, and let the
stars

Come forth, perhaps without one quiet
thought, 255

Such was the tenour of the second act
In this new life. Imagination slept,
And yet not utterly. I could not print
Ground where the grass had yielded to
the steps

Of generations of illustrious men, 260
Unmoved. I could not always lightly
pass

Through the same gateways, sleep where
they had slept,

Wake where they waked, range that in-
closure old,

That garden of great intellects, undis-
turbed.

Place also by the side of this dark sense
Of nobler feeling, that those spiritual
men, 266

Even the great Newton's own ethereal
self,

Seemed humbled in these precincts thence
to be

The more endeared. Their several me-
mories here

(Even like their persons in their portraits
clothed 270

With the accustomed garb of daily life)
Put on a lowly and a touching grace

Of more distinct humanity, that left
All genuine admiration unimpaired.

Beside the pleasant Mill of Tromping-
ton 275

I laughed with Chaucer; in the hawthorn
shade

Heard him, while birds were warbling,
tell his tales

Of amorous passion. And that gentle
Bard,

Chosen by the Muses for their Page of
State—

Sweet Spenser, moving through his
clouded heaven 280

With the moon's beauty and the moon's
soft pace,

I called him Brother, Englishman, and
Friend!

Yea, our blind Poet, who, in his later day,
Stood almost single; uttering odious
truth—

Darkness before, and danger's voice be-
hind, 285

Soul awful—if the earth has ever lodged
An awful soul—I seemed to see him here

Familiarly, and in his scholar's dress
Bounding before me, yet a stripling
youth—

A boy, no better, with his rosy cheeks; 290
Angelic, keen eye, courageous look,

And conscious step of purity and pride.
Among the band of my compeers was one

Whom chance had stationed in the very
room

Honoured by Milton's name. O temperate
Bard! 295

Be it confessed that, for the first time, seated
Within thy innocent lodge and oratory,

One of a festive circle, I poured out
Libations, to thy memory drank, till pride

And gratitude grew dizzy in a brain 300
Never excited by the fumes of wine

Before that hour, or since. Then, forth
I ran

From the assembly; through a length of
streets,

Ran, ostrich-like, to reach our chapel door
In not a desperate or opprobrious time,

Albeit long after the importunate bell 306
Had stopped, with wearisome Cassandra

voice

No longer haunting the dark winter night.
Call back, O Friend! a moment to thy
mind, 309

The place itself and fashion of the rites.
With careless ostentation shouldering up

My surplice, through the inferior throng
I clove

Of the plain Burghers, who in audience
stood

On the last skirts of their permitted
ground,

Under the pealing organ. Empty
thoughts! 315

I am ashamed of them: and that great
Bard,

And thou, O Friend! who in thy ample
mind

Hast placed me high above my best
deserts,

Ye will forgive the weakness of that hour,
In some of its unworthy vanities, 320

Brother to many more.

In this mixed sort

The months passed on, remissly, not given up

To wilful alienation from the right, 323
Or walks of open scandal, but in vague
And loose indifference, easy likings, aims
Of a low pitch—duty and zeal dismissed,
Yet Nature, or a happy course of things
Not doing in their stead the needful work.
The memory languidly revolved, the heart
Reposed in noontide rest, the inner pulse
Of contemplation almost failed to beat.
Such life might not inaptly be compared
To a floating island, an amphibious spot
Unsound, of spongy texture, yet withal
Not wanting a fair face of water-weeds
And pleasant flowers. The thirst of living

praise, 336
Fit reverence for the glorious Dead, the sight

Of those long vistas, sacred catacombs,
Where mighty *minds* lie visibly entombed,
Have often stirred the heart of youth,
and bred 340

A fervent love of rigorous discipline.—
Alas! such high emotion touched not me.

Look was there none within these walls
to shame

My easy spirits, and discountenance 344
Their light composure, far less to instil
A calm resolve of mind, firmly addressed
To puissant efforts. Nor was this the blame

Of others but my own; I should, in truth,
As far as doth concern my single self,
Misdeem most widely, lodging it elsewhere: 350

For I, bred up 'mid Nature's luxuries,
Was a spoiled child, and, rambling like the wind,

As I had done in daily intercourse
With those crystalline rivers, solemn heights,

And mountains, ranging like a fowl of the air, 355

I was ill-tutored for captivity;
To quit my pleasure, and, from month to month,

Take up a station calmly on the perch
Of sedentary peace. Those lovely forms
Had also left less space within my mind,
Which, wrought upon instinctively, had found 361

A freshness in those objects of her love,
A winning power, beyond all other power.
Not that I slighted books,—that were to lack

All sense,—but other passions in me ruled, 365

Passions more fervent, making me less prompt

To in-door study than was wise or well,
Or suited to those years. Yet I, though used

In magisterial liberty to rove,
Culling such flowers of learning as might tempt 370

A random choice, could shadow forth a place

(If now I yield not to a flattering dream)
Whose studious aspect should have bent me down

To instantaneous service; should at once
Have made me pay to science and to arts
And written lore, acknowledged my liege lord, 376

A homage frankly offered up, like that
Which I had paid to Nature. Toil and pains

In this recess, by thoughtful Fancy built,
Should spread from heart to heart; and stately groves, 380

Majestic edifices, should not want
A corresponding dignity within.

The congregating temper that pervades
Our unripe years, not wasted, should be taught

To minister to works of high attempt—
Works which the enthusiast would perform with love. 386

Youth should be awed, religiously possessed

With a conviction of the power that waits
On knowledge, when sincerely sought and prized 389

For its own sake, on glory and on praise
If but by labour won, and fit to endure.
The passing day should learn to put aside
Her trappings here, should strip them off abashed

Before antiquity and steadfast truth
And strong book-mindedness; and over all 395

A healthy sound simplicity should reign,
A seemly plainness, name it what you will,

Republican or pious.

If these thoughts
Are a gratuitous emblazonry
That mocks the recreant age we live in, then 400

Be Folly and False-seeming free to affect
Whatever formal gait of discipline
Shall raise them highest in their own esteem—

Let them parade among the Schools at will,

But spare the House of God. Was ever known 405

The witless shepherd who persists to drive

A flock that thirsts not to a pool disliked?
A weight must surely hang on days begun

And ended with such mockery. Be wise,
Ye Presidents and Deans, and, till the spirit 410

Of ancient times revive, and youth be trained

At home in pious service, to your bells
Give seasonable rest, for 'tis a sound
Hollow as ever vexed the tranquil air;
And your officious doings bring disgrace
On the plain steeples of our English
Church, 416

Whose worship, 'mid remotest village
trees,
Suffers for this. Even Science, too, at
hand

In daily sight of this irreverence,
Is smitten thence with an unnatural taint,
Loses her just authority, falls beneath
Collateral suspicion, else unknown. 422
This truth escaped me not, and I confess,
That having 'mid my native hills given
loose

To a schoolboy's vision, I had raised a
pile 425

Upon the basis of the coming time,
That fell in ruins round me. Oh, what
joy

To see a sanctuary for our country's youth
Informed with such a spirit as might be
Its own protection; a primeval grove, 430
Where, though the shades with cheerfulness
were filled,

Nor indigent of songs warbled from
crowds

In under-coverts, yet the countenance
Of the whole place should bear a stamp
of awe;

A habitation sober and demure 435
For ruminating creatures; a domain
For quiet things to wander in; a haunt
In which the heron should delight to feed
By the shy rivers, and the pelican 439
Upon the cypress spire in lonely thought
Might sit and sun himself.—Alas! alas!
In vain for such solemnity I looked;
Mine eyes were crossed by butterflies,
ears vexed

By chattering popinjays; the inner heart
Seemed trivial, and the impress without
Of a too gaudy region.

Different sight 446
Those venerable Doctors saw of old,
When all who dwelt within these famous
walls

Led in abstemiousness a studious life;
When, in forlorn and naked chambers
cooped 450

And crowded, o'er the ponderous books
they hung

Like caterpillars eating out their way
In silence, or with keen devouring noise
Not to be tracked or fathered. Princes
then

At matins froze, and couched at curfew-
time, 455

Trained up through piety and zeal to
prize

Spare diet, patient labour, and plain
weeds.

O seat of Arts! renowned throughout the
world!

Far different service in those homely days
The Muses' modest nurslings underwent
From their first childhood: in that
glorious time 461

When Learning, like a stranger come
from far,
Sounding through Christian lands her
trumpet, roused

Peasant and king; when boys and youths,
the growth

Of ragged villages and crazy huts, 465
Forsook their homes, and, errant in the
quest

Of Patron, famous school or friendly
nook,

Where, pensioned, they in shelter might
sit down,

From town to town and through wide
scattered realms

Journeyed with ponderous folios in their
hands; 470

And often, starting from some covert
place,

Saluted the chance comer on the road,
Crying, 'An obolus, a penny give

To a poor scholar!'—when illustrious
men, 474

Lovers of truth, by penury constrained,
Bucer, Erasmus, or Melancthon, read

Before the doors or windows of their
cells

By moonshine through mere lack of taper
light.

But peace to vain regrets! We see but
darkly

Even when we look behind us, and best
things 480

Are not so pure by nature that they needs
Must keep to all, as fondly all believe,

Their highest promise. If the mariner,
When at reluctant distance he bath

passed
Some tempting island, could but know
the ills 485

That must have fallen upon him had he
brought

His bark to land upon the wished-for
shore,

Good cause would oft be his to thank the
surf

Whose white belt scared him thence, or
wind that blew

Inexorably adverse: for myself 490

I grieve not; happy is the gown'd youth,
Who only misses what I missed, who falls

No lower than I fell.

I did not love,
Judging not ill perhaps, the timid course

Of our scholastic studies; could have
wished 495

To see the river flow with ampler range

And freer pace; but more, far more, I
grieved

To see displayed among an eager few,
Who in the field of contest persevered,
Passions unworthy of youth's generous
heart 500

And mounting spirit, pitiaibly repaid,
When so disturbed, whatever palms are
won.

From these I turned to travel with the
shoal

Of more unthinking natures, easy minds
And pillow; yet not wanting love that
makes 505

The day pass lightly on, when foresight
sleeps,

And wisdom and the pledges inter-
changed

With our own inner being are forgot.

Yet was this deep vacation not given up
To utter waste. Hitherto I had stood 510
In my own mind remote from social life,
(At least from what we commonly so
name,)

Like a lone shepherd on a promontory
Who lacking occupation looks far forth
Into the boundless sea, and rather makes
Than finds what he beholds. And sure
it is, 516

That this first transit from the smooth
delights

And wild outlandish walks of simple
youth

To something that resembles an approach
Towards human business, to a privileged
world 520

Within a world, a midway residence
With all its intervenient imagery,
Did better suit my visionary mind,
Far better, than to have been bolted
forth, 524

Thrust out abruptly into Fortune's way
Among the conflicts of substantial life;
By a more just gradation did lead on
To higher things; more naturally matured,
For permanent possession, better fruits,
Whether of truth or virtue, to ensue. 530
In serious mood, but oftener, I confess,
With playful zest of fancy, did we note
(How could we less?) the manners and the
ways

Of those who lived distinguished by the
badge

Of good or ill report; or those with whom
By frame of Academic discipline 536
We were perforce connected, men whose
sway

And known authority of office served
To set our minds on edge, and did no
more.

Nor wanted we rich pastime of this kind,
Found everywhere, but chiefly in the
ring 541

Of the grave Elders, men unscoured,
grotesque

In character, tricked out like aged trees
Which through the lapse of their infirmity
Give ready place to any random seed 545
That chooses to be reared upon their
trunks.

Here on my view, confronting vividly
Those shepherd swains whom I had lately
left,

Appeared a different aspect of old age;
How different! yet both distinctly marked,
Objects embossed to catch the general
eye, 551

Or portraitures for special use designed,
As some might seem, so aptly do they
serve

To illustrate Nature's book of rudiments—
That book upheld as with maternal care
When she would enter on her tender
scheme 556

Of teaching comprehension with delight,
And mingling playful with pathetic
thoughts.

The surfaces of artificial life
And manners finely wrought, the delicate
race 560

Of colours, lurking, gleaming up and
down

Through that state arras woven with silk
and gold;

This wily interchange of snaky hues,
Willingly or unwillingly revealed,
I neither knew nor cared for; and as
such 565

Were wanting here, I took what might be
found

Of less elaborate fabric. At this day
I smile, in many a mountain solitude
Conjuring up scenes as obsolete in freaks
Of character, in points of wit as broad,
As caught by wooden images performed
For entertainment of the gaping crowd
At wake or fair. And oftentimes do flit
Remembrances before me of old men—
Old humourists, who have been long in
their graves, 575

And having almost in my mind put off
Their human names, have into phantoms
passed

Of texture midway between life and books.

I play the loiterer: 'tis enough to note
That here in dwarf proportions were
expressed 580

The limbs of the great world; its eager
strifes

Collaterally pourtrayed, as in mock fight,
A tournament of blows, some hardly dealt
Though short of mortal combat; and
whate'er 584

Might in this pageant be supposed to hit
An artless rustic's notice, this way less,

More that way, was not wasted upon
me—

And yet the spectacle may well demand
A more substantial name, no mimic
show,

Itself a living part of a live whole, 590
A creek in the vast sea; for, all degrees
And shapes of spurious fame and short-
lived praise

Here sate in state, and fed with daily
alms

Retainers won away from solid good;
And here was Labour, his own bond-
slave; Hope, 595

That never set the pains against the
prize;

Idleness halting with his weary clog,
And poor misguided Shame, and witless
Fear,

And simple Pleasure foraging for Death;
Honour misplaced, and Dignity astray;
Feuds, factions, flatteries, enmity, and
guile, 601

Murmuring submission, and bald govern-
ment,

(The idol weak as the idolater),
And Decency and Custom starving Truth,
And blind Authority beating with his
staff 605

The child that might have led him;
Emptiness

Followed as of good omen, and meek
Worth

Left to herself unheard of and unknown.

Of these and other kindred notices
I cannot say what portion is in truth 610
The naked recollection of that time,
And what may rather have been called to
life

By after-meditation. But delight
That, in an easy temper lulled asleep,
Is still with Innocence its own reward, 615
This was not wanting. Carelessly I
roamed

As through a wide museum from whose
stores

A casual rarity is singled out
And has its brief perusal, then gives way

To others, all supplanted in their turn;
Till 'mid this crowded neighbourhood of
things 621

That are by nature most unneighbourly,
The head turns round and cannot right
itself;

And though an aching and a barren sense
Of gay confusion still be uppermost, 625
With few wise longings and but little love,

Yet to the memory something cleaves at
last,

Whence profit may be drawn in times to
come.

Thus in submissive idleness, my Friend!
The labouring time of autumn, winter,
spring, 630

Eight months! rolled pleasingly away;
the ninth

Came and returned me to my native hills.

BOOK FOURTH

SUMMER VACATION

BRIGHT was the summer's noon when
quickenings steps

Followed each other till a dreary moor
Was crossed, a bare ridge clomb, upon
whose top

Standing alone, as from a rampart's edge,
I overlooked the bed of Windermere, 5
Like a vast river, stretching in the sun.

With exultation, at my feet I saw
Lake, islands, promontories, gleaming
bays,

A universe of Nature's fairest forms
Proudly revealed with instantaneous
burst, 10

Magnificent, and beautiful, and gay.
I bounded down the hill shouting amain
For the old Ferryman; to the shout the
rocks

Replied, and when the Charon of the
flood

Had staid his oars, and touched the
jutting pier, 15

I did not step into the well-known boat

Without a cordial greeting. Thence with
speed

Up the familiar hill I took my way
Towards that sweet Valley¹ where I had
been reared;

'Twas but a short hour's walk, ere veering
round 20

I saw the snow-white church upon her hill
Sit like a throned Lady, sending out
A gracious look all over her domain.
Yon azure smoke betrays the lurking

town;

With eager footsteps I advance and reach
The cottage threshold where my journey
closed. 26

Glad welcome had I, with some tears,
perhaps,

From my old Dame, so kind and motherly,
While she perused me with a parent's
pride.

The thoughts of gratitude shall fall like
dew 30

¹ Hawkshead.

THE PRELUDE

[BOOK IV

Upon ~~the~~ grave, good creature! While
my heart

Can beat never will I forget thy name.
Heaven's blessing be upon thee where
thou liest

After thy innocent and busy stir 34
In narrow cares, thy little daily growth
Of calm enjoyments, after eighty years,
And more than eighty, of untroubled life,
Childless, yet by the strangers to thy
blood

Honoured with little less than filial love.
What joy was mine to see thee once
again, 40

Thee and thy dwelling, and a crowd of
things

About its narrow precincts all beloved,
And many of them seeming yet my own!
Why should I speak of what a thousand
hearts

Have felt, and every man alive can
guess? 45

The rooms, the court, the garden were not
left

Long unsaluted, nor the sunny seat
Round the stone table under the dark
pine,

Friendly to studious or to festive hours;
Nor that unruly child of mountain birth,
The froward brook, who, soon as he was
boxed 51

Within our garden, found himself at once,
As if by trick insidious and unkind,
Stripped of his voice and left to dimple
down

(Without an effort and without a will) 55
A channel paved by man's officious care.
I looked at him and smiled, and smiled
again,

And in the press of twenty thousand
thoughts,

'Ha,' quoth I, 'pretty prisoner, are you
there!'

Well might sarcastic Fancy then have
whispered, 60

'An emblem here behold of thy own life;
In its late course of even days with all
Their smooth enthrallment;' but the
heart was full,

Too full for that reproach. My aged
Dame

Walked proudly at my side: she guided
me; 65

I willing, nay—nay, wishing to be led.
—The face of every neighbour whom
I met

Was like a volume to me; some were
hailed

Upon the road, some busy at their work,
Unceremonious greetings interchanged

With half the length of a long field
between. 71

Among my schoolfellows I scattered
round

Like recognitions, but with some con-
straint

Attended, doubtless, with a little pride,
But with more shame, for my habili-
ments, 75

The transformation wrought by gay
attire.

Not less delighted did I take my place
At our domestic table: and, dear Friend!
In this endeavour simply to relate

A Poet's history, may I leave untold 80
The thankfulness with which I laid me
down

In my accustomed bed, more welcome
now

Perhaps than if it had been more desired
Or been more often thought of with
regret;

That lowly bed whence I had heard the
wind 85

Roar, and the rain beat hard; where I so
oft

Had lain awake on summer nights to
watch

The moon in splendour couched among
the leaves

Of a tall ash, that near our cottage stood;
Had watched her with fixed eyes while to
and fro 90

In the dark summit of the waving tree
She rocked with every impulse of the
breeze.

Among the favourites whom it pleased
me well 93

To see again, was one by ancient right
Our inmate, a rough terrier of the hills;
By birth and call of nature pre-ordained
To hunt the badger and unearth the fox

Among the impervious crags, but having
been

From youth our own adopted, he had
passed 99

Into a gentler service. And when first
The boyish spirit flagged, and day by day

Along my veins I kindled with the stir,
The fermentation, and the vernal heat
Of poesy, affecting private shades

Like a sick Lover, then this dog was
used 105

To watch me, an attendant and a friend,
Obsequious to my steps early and late,

Though often of such dilatory walk
Tired, and uneasy at the halts I made.

A hundred times when, roving high and
low, 110

I have been harassed with the toil of
verse,

Much pains and little progress, and at
once

Some lovely Image in the song rose up
Full-formed, like Venus rising from the
sea; 114

Then have I darted forwards to let loose

My hand upon his back with stormy joy,
 Caressing him again and yet again.
 And when at evening on the public way
 I sauntered, like a river murmuring
 And talking to itself when all things
 else¹²⁰
 Are still, the creature trotted on before;
 Such was his custom; but whene'er he
 met
 A passenger approaching, he would turn
 To give me timely notice, and straight-
 way,
 Grateful for that admonishment, I hushed
 My voice, composed my gait, and, with
 the air¹²⁶
 And mien of one whose thoughts are free,
 advanced
 To give and take a greeting that might
 save
 My name from piteous rumours, such as
 wait
 On men suspected to be crazed in brain.

Those walks well worthy to be prized
 and loved—¹³¹
 Regretted!—that word, too, was on my
 tongue,
 But they were richly laden with all good,
 And cannot be remembered but with
 thanks
 And gratitude, and perfect joy of heart—
 Those walks in all their freshness now
 came back¹³⁶
 Like a returning Spring. When first I
 made
 Once more the circuit of our little lake,
 If ever happiness hath lodged with man,
 That day consummate happiness was
 mine,¹⁴⁰
 Wide-spreading, steady, calm, contem-
 plative.
 The sun was set, or setting, when I left
 Our cottage door, and evening soon
 brought on
 A sober hour, not winning or serene,
 For cold and raw the air was, and un-
 tuned;¹⁴⁵
 But as a face we love is sweetest then
 When sorrow damps it, or, whatever look
 It chance to wear, is sweetest if the heart
 Have fulness in herself; even so with me
 It fared that evening. Gently did my
 soul¹⁵⁰
 Put off her veil, and, self-transmuted,
 stood
 Naked, as in the presence of her God.
 While on I walked, a comfort seemed to
 touch
 A heart that had not been disconsolate:
 Strength came where weakness was not
 known to be,¹⁵⁵
 At least not felt; and restoration came
 Like an intruder knocking at the door
 Of unacknowledged weariness. I took

The balance, and with firm hand weighed
 myself.
 —Of that external scene which round me
 lay,¹⁶⁰
 Little, in this abstraction, did I see;
 Remembered less; but I had inward
 hopes
 And swellings of the spirit, was rapt and
 soothed,
 Conversed with promises, had glimmer-
 ing views¹⁶⁴
 How life pervades the undecaying mind;
 How the immortal soul with God-like
 power
 Informs, creates, and thaws the deepest
 sleep
 That time can lay upon her; how on
 earth
 Man, if he do but live within the light
 Of high endeavours, daily spreads abroad
 His being armed with strength that can-
 not fail.¹⁷¹
 Nor was there want of milder thoughts,
 of love,
 Of innocence, and holiday repose;
 And more than pastoral quiet, 'mid the
 stir¹⁷⁴
 Of boldest projects, and a peaceful end
 At last, or glorious, by endurance won.
 Thus musing, in a wood I sate me down
 Alone, continuing there to muse: the
 slopes
 And heights meanwhile were slowly over-
 spread¹⁸⁰
 With darkness, and before a rippling
 breeze
 The long lake lengthened out its hoary
 line,
 And in the sheltered coppice where I
 sate,
 Around me from among the hazel leaves,
 Now here, now there, moved by the
 straggling wind,¹⁸⁴
 Came ever and anon a breath-like sound,
 Quick as the pantings of the faithful dog,
 The off and on companion of my walk;
 And such, at times, believing them to
 be,
 I turned my head to look if he were there;
 Then into solemn thought I passed once
 more.¹⁹⁰

A freshness also found I at this time
 In human life, the daily life of those
 Whose occupations really I loved;
 The peaceful scene oft filled me with
 surprise
 Changed like a garden in the heat of
 spring,¹⁹⁵
 After an eight-days' absence. For (to
 omit
 The things which were the same and yet
 appeared
 Far otherwise) amid this rural solitude,

THE PRELUDE

[BOOK IV

A narrow Vale where each was known to
all,
'Twas not indifferent to a youthful mind
To mark some sheltering bower or sunny
nook, 201
Where an old man had used to sit alone,
Now vacant; pale-faced babes whom I
had left
In arms, now rosy prattlers at the feet
Of a pleased grandame tottering up and
down; 205
And growing girls whose beauty, filched
away
With all its pleasant promises, was gone
To deck some slighted playmate's homely
cheek.

Yes, I had something of a subtler sense,
And often looking round was moved to
smiles 210
Such as a delicate work of humour breeds;
I read, without design, the opinions,
thoughts,
Of those plain-living people now observed
With clearer knowledge; with another eye
I saw the quiet woodman in the woods,
The shepherd roam the hills. With new
delight, 216
This chiefly, did I note my grey-haired
Dame;
Saw her go forth to church or other work
Of state, equipped in monumental trim;
Short velvet cloak, (her bonnet of the
like), 220
A mantle such as Spanish Cavaliers
Wore in old time. Her smooth domestic
life,
Affectionate without disquietude,
Her talk, her business, pleased me; and
no less
Her clear though shallow stream of piety
That ran on Sabbath days a fresher
course; 226
With thoughts unfelt till now I saw her
read
Her Bible on hot Sunday afternoons,
And loved the book, when she had dropped
asleep
And made of it a pillow for her head. 230

Nor less do I remember to have felt,
Distinctly manifested at this time,
A human-heartedness about my love
For objects hitherto the absolute wealth
Of my own private being and no more;
Which I had loved, even as a blessed
spirit 236
Or Angel, if he were to dwell on earth,
Might love in individual happiness.
But now there opened on me other
thoughts
Of change, congratulation or regret, 240
A pensive feeling! It spread far and
wide;

The trees, the mountains shared it, and
the brooks,
The stars of Heaven, now seen in their
old haunts—
White Sirius glittering o'er the southern
crag,
Orion with his belt, and those fair Seven,
Acquaintances of every little child, 246
And Jupiter, my own beloved star!
Whatever shadings of mortality,
Whatever imports from the world of
death
Had come among these objects here-
tofore, 250
Were, in the main, of mood less tender:
strong,
Deep, gloomy were they, and severe;
the scatterings
Of awe or tremulous dread, that had given
way
In later youth to yearnings of a love
Enthusiastic, to delight and hope. 255

As one who hangs down-bending from
the side
Of a slow-moving boat, upon the breast
Of a still water, solacing himself
With such discoveries as his eye can
make
Beneath him in the bottom of the deep,
Sees many beauteous sights—weeds,
fishes, flowers, 261
Grots, pebbles, roots of trees, and fancies
more,
Yet often is perplexed and cannot part
The shadow from the substance, rocks
and sky,
Mountains and clouds, reflected in the
depth 265
Of the clear flood, from things which
there abide
In their true dwelling; now is crossed by
gleam
Of his own image, by a sunbeam now,
And wavering motions sent he knows not
whence,
Impediments that make his task more
sweet; 270
Such pleasant office have we long pursued
Incumbent o'er the surface of past time
With like success, nor often have ap-
peared
Shapes fairer or less doubtfully discerned
Than these to which the Tale, indulgent
Friend! 275
Would now direct thy notice. Yet in
spite
Of pleasure won, and knowledge not
withheld,
There was an inner falling off—I loved,
Loved deeply all that had been loved
before,
More deeply even than ever: but a
swarm 280

Of heady schemes jostling each other,
gawds,

And feast and dance, and public revelry,
And sports and games (too grateful in
themselves,

Yet in themselves less grateful, I believe,
Than as they were a badge glossy and
fresh

Of manliness and freedom) all conspired²⁸⁵
To lure my mind from firm habitual
quest

Of feeding pleasures, to depress the zeal
And damp those yearnings which had
once been mine—

A wild, unworldly-minded youth, given
up

To his own eager thoughts. It would
demand

Some skill, and longer time than may be
spared,

To paint these vanities, and how they
wrought

In haunts where they, till now, had been
unknown.

It seemed the very garments that I wore
Preyed on my strength, and stopped the
quiet stream

Of self-forgetfulness.²⁹⁶

Yes, that heartless chase
Of trivial pleasures was a poor exchange
For books and nature at that early age.

'Tis true, some casual knowledge might
be gained

Of character or life; but at that time,
Of manners put to school I took small
note,

And all my deeper passions lay else-
where.

Far better had it been to exalt the mind
By solitary study, to uphold

Intense desire through meditative peace;
And yet, for chastisement of these
regrets,

The memory of one particular hour
Doth here rise up against me. 'Mid a
throng

Of maids and youths, old men, and
matrons staid,

A medley of all tempers, I had passed³¹⁰
The night in dancing, gaiety, and mirth,
With din of instruments and shuffling
feet,

And glancing forms, and tapers glittering,
And unaimed prattle flying up and down;

Spirits upon the stretch, and here and
there

Slight shocks of young love-liking inter-
spersed,

Whose transient pleasure mounted to the
head,

And tingled through the veins. Ere we
retired,

The cock had crowed, and now the³²⁰
eastern sky

Was kindling, nor unseen, from humble
copse

And open field, through which the path-
way wound,

And homeward led my steps. Magni-
ficent

The morning rose, in memorable pomp,
Glorious as e'er I had beheld—in front,

The sea lay laughing at a distance; near,
The solid mountains shone, bright as the
clouds,

Grain-tinctured, drenched in empyrean
light;

And in the meadows and the lower
grounds

Was all the sweetness of a common
dawn—

Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds,
And labourers going forth to till the
fields.

Ah! need I say, dear Friend! that to
the brim

My heart was full; I made no vows, but
vows

Were then made for me; bond unknown
to me

Was given, that I should be, else sinning
greatly,

A dedicated Spirit. On I walked *
In thankful blessedness, which yet sur-
vives.

Strange rendez-vous my mind was at
that time,

A parti-coloured show of grave and gay,
Solid and light, short-sighted and pro-
found;

Of inconsiderate habits and sedate,³⁴¹
Consorting in one mansion unproved.

The worth I knew of powers that I
possessed,

Though slighted and too oft misused.
Besides,

That summer, swarming as it did with
thoughts

Transient and idle, lacked not intervals
When Folly from the frown of fleeting
Time

Shrunk, and the mind experienced in
herself

Conformity as just as that of old³⁵⁰
To the end and written spirit of God's
works,

Whether held forth in Nature or in Man,
Through pregnant vision, separate or
conjoined.

When from our better selves we have
too long

Been parted by the hurrying world, and
droop,

Sick of its business, of its pleasures tired,³⁵⁵
How gracious, how benign, is Solitude;

How potent a mere image of her sway;

THE PRELUDE

[BOOK IV

Most potent when impressed upon the
mind
With an appropriate human centre—
hermit, 360

Though faded, yet entire. Companion.
less, 399
No dog attending, by no staff sustained,
He stood, and in his very dress appeared
A desolation a simplicity.

Kneeling at prayers; or watchman on
the top 364
Of lighthouse, beaten by Atlantic waves;
Or as the soul of that great Power is met
Sometimes embodied on a public road,
When, for the night deserted, it assumes
A character of quiet more profound
Than pathless wastes.

Once, when those summer
months 370
Were flown, and autumn brought its
annual show
Of oars with oars contending, sails with
sails,
Upon Winander's spacious breast, it
chanced
That—after I had left a flower-decked
room

(Whose in-door pastime, lighted up,
survived 375
To a late hour), and spirits overwrought
Were making night do penance for a
day

Spent in a round of strenuous idleness—
My homeward course led up a long
ascent,

Where the road's watery surface, to the
top 380

Of that sharp rising, glittered to the moon
And bore the semblance of another
stream

Stealing with silent lapse to join the
brook

That murmured in the vale. All else
was still;

No living thing appeared in earth or air,
And, save the flowing water's peaceful
voice, 386

Sound there was none—but, lo! an un-
couth shape,

Shown by a sudden turning of the road,
So near that, slipping back into the shade
Of a thick hawthorn, I could mark him
well, 390

Myself unseen. He was of stature tall,
A span above man's common measure,
tall,

Stiff, lank, and upright; a more meagre
man

Was never seen before by night or day.
ong were his arms, pallid his hands;
his mouth 395

Looked ghastly in the moonlight: from
behind,

A mile-stone propped him; I could also
ken

That he was clothed in military garb,

lips, ere long,
Issued low muttered sounds, as if of
pain 405

Or some uneasy thought; yet still his
form

Kept the same awful steadiness—at his
feet

His shadow lay, and moved not. From
self-blame

Not wholly free, I watched him thus; at
length 409

Subduing my heart's specious cowardice,
I left the shady nook where I had stood

And hailed him. Slowly from his resting-
place

He rose, and with a lean and wasted arm
In measured gesture lifted to his head

Returned my salutation; then resumed
His station as before; and when I asked

His history, the veteran, in reply, 417
Was neither slow nor eager; but, un-
moved,

And with a quiet uncomplaining voice,
A stately air of mild indifference, 420

He told in few plain words a soldier's
tale—

That in the Tropic Islands he had served,
Whence he had landed scarcely three

weeks past;
That on his landing he had been dis-
missed,

And now was travelling towards his
native home. 425

This heard, I said, in pity, 'Come with
me.'

He stooped, and straightway from the
ground took up

An oaken staff by me yet unobserved—
A staff which must have dropt from his

slack hand
And lay till now neglected in the grass.

Though weak his step and cautious, he
appeared 431

To travel without pain, and I beheld,
With an astonishment but ill suppressed,

His ghostly figure moving at my side;
Nor could I, while we journeyed thus,

forbear 435
To turn from present hardships to the
past,

And speak of war, battle, and pestilence,
Sprinkling this talk with questions, better

spared,
On what he might himself have seen or
felt. 439

He all the while was in demeanour calm,
Concise in answer; solemn and sublime

BOOK IV]

He might have seemed, but that in all he
said

There was a strange half-absence, as of one
Knowing too well the importance of his
theme, 444

But feeling it no longer. Our discourse
Soon ended, and together on we passed
In silence through a wood gloomy and
still.

Up-turning, then, along an open field,
We reached a cottage. At the door I
knocked,

And earnestly to charitable care 450
Commended him as a poor friendless
man,

Belated and by sickness overcome.

Assured that now the traveller would
repose

In comfort, I entreated that henceforth
He would not linger in the public ways,
But ask for timely furtherance and help

SUMMER VACATION

Such as his state required. At this re-
proof, 457

With the same ghastly mildness in his
look,

He said, 'My trust is in the God of
Heaven,
And in the eye of him who passes me!'

The cottage door was speedily unbarred,
And now the soldier touched his hat once
more 462

With his lean hand, and in a faltering
voice,

Whose tone bespoke reviving interests
Till then unfelt, he thanked me; I re-
turned 465

The farewell blessing of the patient man,
And so we parted. Back I cast a look,
And lingered near the door a little space,
Then sought with quiet heart my distant
home.

BOOK FIFTH

BOOKS

WHEN Contemplation, like the night-
calm felt

Through earth and sky, spreads widely,
and sends deep

Into the soul its tranquillising power,
Even then I sometimes grieve for thee,

O Man,
Earth's paramount Creature! not so much
for woes 5

That thou endurest; heavy though that
weight be,

Cloud-like it mounts, or touched with
light divine

Doth melt away; but for those palms
achieved,

Through length of time, by patient
exercise

Of study and hard thought; there, there, 10
it is

That sadness finds its fuel. Hitherto,
In progress through this Verse, my mind

hath looked
Upon the speaking face of earth and
heaven

As her prime teacher, intercourse with
man

Established by the sovereign Intellect, 15
Who through that bodily image hath

diffused,
As might appear to the eye of fleeting
time,

A deathless spirit. Thou also, man! hast
wrought,

For commerce of thy nature with herself,
Things that aspire to unconquerable life;

And yet we feel—we cannot choose but
feel— 21

That they must perish. Tremblings of
the heart

It gives, to think that our immortal
being

No more shall need such garments; and
yet man,

As long as he shall be the child of earth,
Might almost 'weep to have' what he

may lose, 26

Nor be himself extinguished, but survive,
Abject, depressed, forlorn, disconsolate.

A thought is with me sometimes, and I
say,—

Should the whole frame of earth by inward
throes 30

Be wrenched, or fire come down from far
to scorch

Her pleasant habitations, and dry up
Old Ocean, in his bed left singed and
bare,

Yet would the living Presence still subsist
Victorious, and composure would ensue,

And kindlings like the morning—presage
sure 36

Of day returning and of life revived.
But all the meditations of mankind,

Yea, all the adamantine holds of truth
By reason built, or passion, which itself

Is highest reason in a soul sublime; 41

The consecrated works of Bard and Sage,
Sensuous or intellectual, wrought by men,

Twin labourers and heirs of the same
hopes;

THE PRELUDE

[BOOK V

Where would they be? Oh! why hath not
the Mind 45

Some element to stamp her image on
In nature somewhat nearer to her own?

Why, gifted with such powers to send
abroad

Her spirit, must it lodge in shrines so
frail?

One day, when from my lips a like
complaint 50

Had fallen in presence of a studious
friend,

He with a smile made answer, that in
truth

'Twas going far to seek disquietude;
But on the front of his reproof confessed

That he himself had oftentimes given
way 55

To kindred hauntings. Whereupon I told,
That once in the stillness of a summer's
noon,

While I was seated in a rocky cave
By the sea-side, perusing, so it chanced,

The famous history of the errant knight
Recorded by Cervantes, these same
thoughts 61

Beset me, and to height unusual rose,
While listlessly I sate, and, having closed

The book, had turned my eyes toward
the wide sea.

On poetry and geometric truth, 65
And their high privilege of lasting life,
From all internal injury exempt,

I mused; upon these chiefly: and at
length,

My senses yielding to the sultry air,
Sleep seized me, and I passed into a
dream. 70

I saw before me stretched a boundless
plain

Of sandy wilderness, all black and void,
And as I looked around, distress and fear

Came creeping over me, when at my side,
Close at my side, an uncouth shape

appeared 75

Upon a dromedary, mounted high,
He seemed an Arab of the Bedouin
tribes:

A lance he bore, and underneath one arm
A stone, and in the opposite hand a shell

Of a surpassing brightness. At the sight
Much I rejoiced, not doubting but a
guide 81

Was present, one who with unerring skill
Would through the desert lead me; and
while yet

I looked and looked, self-questioned what
this freight

Which the new-comer carried through
the waste 85

Could mean, the Arab told me that the
stone

(To give it in the language of the dream)

Was 'Euclid's Elements;' and 'This,' said
he,

'Is something of more worth;' and at
the word

Stretched forth the shell, so beautiful in
shape, 90

In colour so resplendent, with command
That I should hold it to my ear. I did so,

And heard that instant in an unknown
tongue,

Which yet I understood, articulate sounds,
A loud prophetic blast of harmony; 95

An Ode, in passion uttered, which fore-
told

Destruction to the children of the earth
By deluge, now at hand. No sooner
ceased

The song, than the Arab with calm look
declared

That all would come to pass of which the
voice 100

Had given forewarning, and that he
himself

Was going then to bury those two books:
The one that held acquaintance with the
stars,

And wedded soul to soul in purest bond
Of reason, undisturbed by space or time;

The other that was a god, yea many gods,
Had voices more than all the winds, with
power 107

To exhilarate the spirit, and to soothe,
Through every clime, the heart of human
kind.

While this was uttering, strange as it
may seem, 110

I wondered not, although I plainly saw
The one to be a stone, the other a shell;

Nor doubted once but that they both were
books,

Having a perfect faith in all that passed.
Far stronger, now, grew the desire I felt

To cleave unto this man; but when I
prayed 116

To share his enterprise, he hurried on
Reckless of me: I followed, not unseen,

For oftentimes he cast a backward look,
Grasping his twofold treasure.—Lance in
rest, 120

He rode, I keeping pace with him; and
now

He, to my fancy, had become the knight
Whose tale Cervantes tells; yet not the
knight,

But was an Arab of the desert too;
Of these was neither, and was both at
once. 125

His countenance, meanwhile, grew more
disturbed;

And, looking backwards when he looked,
mine eyes

Saw, over half the wilderness diffused,
A bed of glittering light: I asked the
cause:

'It is,' said he, 'the waters of the deep
 Gathering upon us;' quickening then
 the pace ¹³¹
 Of the unwieldy creature he bestrode,
 He left me: I called after him aloud;
 He heeded not; but, with his twofold
 charge ¹³⁴
 Still in his grasp, before me, full in view,
 Went hurrying o'er the illimitable waste,
 With the fleet waters of a drowning
 world
 In chase of him; whereat I waked in
 terror,
 And saw the sea before me, and the book,
 In which I had been reading, at my side.

Full often, taking from the world of
 sleep ¹⁴¹
 This Arab phantom, which I thus beheld,
 This semi-Quixote, I to him have given
 A substance, fancied him a living man,
 A gentle dweller in the desert, crazed ¹⁴⁵
 By love and feeling, and internal thought
 Protracted among endless solitudes;
 Have shaped him wandering upon this
 quest!
 Nor have I pitied him; but rather felt
 Reverence was due to a being thus em-
 ployed; ¹⁵⁰
 And thought that, in the blind and awful
 lair
 Of such a madness, reason did lie crouched.
 Enow there are on earth to take in charge
 Their wives, their children, and their
 virgin loves, ¹⁵⁴
 Or whatsoever else the heart holds dear;
 Enow to stir for these; yea, will I say,
 Contemplating in soberness the approach
 Of an event so dire, by signs in earth
 Or heaven made manifest, that I could
 share
 That maniac's fond anxiety, and go ¹⁶⁰
 Upon like errand. Oftentimes at least
 Me hath such strong entrancement over-
 come,
 When I have held a volume in my hand,
 Poor earthly casket of immortal verse,
 Shakespeare, or Milton, labourers divine!

Great and benign, indeed, must be the
 power ¹⁶⁶
 Of living nature, which could thus so
 long
 Detain me from the best of other guides
 And dearest helpers, left unthanked, un-
 praised.
 Even in the time of lisping infancy, ¹⁷⁰
 And later down, in prattling childhood,
 even
 While I was travelling back among those
 days,
 How could I ever play an ingrate's part?
 Once more should I have made those
 bowers resound,

By intermingling strains of thankfulness
 With their own thoughtless melodies; at
 least ¹⁷⁶
 It might have well beseemed me to repeat
 Some simply fashioned tale, to tell again,
 In slender accents of sweet verse, some
 tale
 That did bewitch me then, and sooths
 me now. ¹⁸⁰
 O Friend! O Poet! brother of my soul,
 Think not that I could pass along un-
 touched
 By these remembrances. Yet wherefore
 speak?
 Why call upon a few weak words to say
 What is already written in the hearts ¹⁸⁵
 Of all that breathe?—what in the path of
 all
 Drops daily from the tongue of every
 child,
 Wherever man is found? The trickling tear
 Upon the cheek of listening Infancy
 Proclaims it, and the insuperable look ¹⁹⁰
 That drinks as if it never could be full.

That portion of my story I shall leave
 There registered: whatever else of power
 Or pleasure sown, or fostered thus, may be
 Peculiar to myself, let that remain ¹⁹⁵
 Where still it works, though hidden from
 all search
 Among the depths of time. Yet is it just
 That here, in memory of all books which
 lay
 Their sure foundations in the heart of
 man,
 Whether by native prose, or numerous
 verse, ²⁰⁰
 That in the name of all inspired souls—
 From Homer the great Thunderer, from
 the voice
 That roars along the bed of Jewish song,
 And that more varied and elaborate,
 Those trumpet-tones of harmony that
 shake ²⁰⁵
 Our shores in England,—from those
 loftiest notes
 Down to the low and wren-like warblings,
 made
 For cottagers and spinners at the wheel,
 And sun-burnt travellers resting their
 tired limbs,
 Stretched under wayside hedge-rows,
 ballad tunes, ²¹⁰
 Food for the hungry ears of little ones,
 And of old men who have survived their
 joys—
 'Tis just that in behalf of these, the works,
 And of the men that framed them,
 whether known,
 Or sleeping nameless in their scattered
 graves, ²¹⁵
 That I should here assert their rights,
 attest

THE PRELUDE

[BOOK V

Their honours, and should, once for all,
 pronounce
 Their benediction; speak of them as
 Powers
 For ever to be hallowed; only less,
 For what we are and what we may
 become, 220
 Than Nature's self, which is the breath of
 God,
 Or His pure Word by miracle revealed.

Rarely and with reluctance would I
 stoop
 To transitory themes; yet I rejoice,
 And, by these thoughts admonished, will
 pour out 225
 Thanks with uplifted heart, that I was
 reared
 Safe from an evil which these days have
 laid
 Upon the children of the land, a pest
 That might have dried me up, body and
 soul. 229
 This verse is dedicate to Nature's self,
 And things that teach as Nature teaches:
 then,
 Oh! where had been the Man, the Poet
 where,
 Where had we been, we two, beloved
 Friend!
 If in the season of unperilous choice,
 In lieu of wandering, as we did, through
 vales 235
 Rich with indigenous produce, open
 ground
 Of Fancy, happy pastures ranged at
 will,
 We had been followed, hourly watched,
 and noosed,
 Each in his several melancholy walk
 Stringed like a poor man's heifer at its
 feed, 240
 Led through the lanes in forlorn servi-
 tude;
 Or rather like a stalled ox debarred
 From touch of growing grass, that may
 not taste
 A flower till it have yielded up its sweets
 A prelibation to the mower's scythe. 245

Behold the parent hen amid her brood,
 Though fledged and feathered, and well
 pleased to part
 And straggle from her presence, still a
 brood,
 And she herself from the maternal bond
 Still undischarged; yet doth she little
 more 250
 Than move with them in tenderness and
 love,
 A centre to the circle which they make;
 And now and then, alike from need of
 theirs
 And call of her own natural appetites,

She scratches, ransacks up the earth for
 food, 255
 Which they partake at pleasure. Early
 died
 My honoured Mother, she who was the
 heart
 And hinge of all our learnings and our
 loves:
 She left us destitute, and, as we might,
 Trooping together. Little suits it me 260
 To break upon the sabbath of her rest
 With any thought that looks at others'
 blame;
 Nor would I praise her but in perfect love.
 Hence am I checked: but let me boldly
 say,
 In gratitude, and for the sake of truth,
 Unheard by her, that she, not falsely
 taught, 266
 Fetching her goodness rather from times
 past,
 Than shaping novelties for times to come,
 Had no presumption, no such jealousy,
 Nor did by habit of her thoughts mis-
 trust 270
 Our nature, but had virtual faith that He
 Who fills the mother's breast with in-
 nocent milk,
 Doth also for our nobler part provide,
 Under His great correction and control,
 As innocent instincts, and as innocent
 food; 275
 Or draws for minds that are left free to
 trust
 In the simplicities of opening life
 Sweet honey out of spurned or dreaded
 weeds.
 This was her creed, and therefore she was
 pure
 From anxious fear of error or mishap,
 And evil, overweeningly so called; 281
 Was not puffed up by false unnatural
 hopes,
 Nor selfish with unnecessary cares,
 Nor with impatience from the season
 asked
 More than its timely produce; rather
 loved 285
 The hours for what they are, than from
 regard
 Glanced on their promises in restless
 pride.
 Such was she—not from faculties more
 strong
 Than others have, but from the times,
 perhaps,
 And spot in which she lived, and through
 a grace 290
 Of modest meekness, simple-mindedness,
 A heart that found benignity and hope,
 Being itself benign.

My drift I fear
 Is scarcely obvious; but, that common
 sense

May try this modern system by its fruits,
 Leave let me take to place before her
 sight 296
 A specimen pourtrayed with faithful
 hand.
 Full early trained to worship seemliness,
 This model of a child is never known
 To mix in quarrels; that were far beneath
 Its dignity; with gifts he bubbles o'er
 As generous as a fountain; selfishness
 May not come near him, nor the little
 throng
 Of fitting pleasures tempt him from his
 path;
 The wandering beggars propagate his
 name, 305
 Dumb creatures find him tender as a nun,
 And natural or supernatural fear,
 Unless it leap upon him in a dream,
 Touches him not. To enhance the wonder,
 see
 How arch his notices, how nice his sense
 Of the ridiculous; not blind is he 311
 To the broad follies of the licensed world,
 Yet innocent himself withal, though
 shrewd,
 And can read lectures upon innocence;
 A miracle of scientific lore, 315
 Ships he can guide across the pathless
 sea,
 And tell you all their cunning; he can
 read
 The inside of the earth, and spell the
 stars;
 He knows the policies of foreign lands;
 Can string you names of districts, cities,
 towns, 320
 The whole world over, tight as beads of
 dew
 Upon a gossamer thread; he sifts, he
 weighs;
 All things are put to question; he must
 live
 Knowing that he grows wiser every day
 Or else not live at all, and seeing too 325
 Each little drop of wisdom as it falls
 Into the dimpling cistern of his heart:
 For this unnatural growth the trainer
 blame,
 Pity the tree.—Poor human vanity,
 Wert thou extinguished, little would be
 left 330
 Which he could truly love; but how
 escape?
 For, ever as a thought of purer birth
 Rises to lead him toward a better clime,
 Some intermeddler still is on the watch
 To drive him back, and pound him, like
 a stray, 335
 Within the pinfold of his own conceit.
 Meanwhile old grandame earth is grieved
 to find
 The playthings, which her love designed
 for him,

Unthought of: in their woodland beds
 the flowers 339
 Weep, and the river sides are all forlorn.
 Oh! give us once again the wishing-cap
 Of Fortunatus, and the invisible coat
 Of Jack the Giant-killer, Robin Hood,
 And Sabra in the forest with St. George!
 The child, whose love is here, at least,
 doth reap 345
 One precious gain, that he forgets himself.

These mighty workmen of our later age,
 Who, with a broad highway, have over-
 bridged
 The froward chaos of futurity,
 Tamed to their bidding; they who have
 the skill 350
 To manage books, and things, and make
 them act
 On infant minds as surely as the sun
 Deals with a flower; the keepers of our
 time,
 The guides and wardens of our faculties,
 Sages who in their prescience would
 control 355
 All accidents, and to the very road
 Which they have fashioned would confine
 us down,
 Like engines; when will their presump-
 tion learn,
 That in the unreasoning progress of the
 world
 A wiser spirit is at work for us, 360
 A better eye than theirs, most prodigal
 Of blessings, and most studious of our
 good,
 Even in what seem our most unfruitful
 hours?

There was a Boy¹: ye knew him well,
 ye cliffs 364
 And islands of Winander!—many a time
 At evening, when the earliest stars began
 To move along the edges of the hills,
 Rising or setting, would he stand alone
 Beneath the trees or by the glimmering lake,
 And there, with fingers interwoven, both
 hands 370
 Pressed closely palm to palm, and to his
 mouth
 Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
 Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,
 That they might answer him; and they
 would shout
 Across the watery vale, and shout again,
 Responsive to his call, with quivering
 peals, 376
 And long halloos and screams, and echoes
 loud,
 Redoubled and redoubled, concourse wild
 Of jocund din; and, when a lengthened
 pause
 Of silence came and baffled his best skill,

¹ See page 145.

THE PRELUDE

[BOOK V

Then sometimes, in that silence while he
hung 381

Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise
Has carried far into his heart the voice
Of mountain torrents; or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind, 385
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven,
received
Into the bosom of the steady lake.

This Boy was taken from his mates,
and died
In childhood, ere he was full twelve years
old. 390

Fair is the spot, most beautiful the vale
Where he was born; the grassy church-
yard hangs

Upon a slope above the village school,
And through that churchyard when my
way has led 394

On summer evenings, I believe that there
A long half hour together I have stood
Mute, looking at the grave in which he
lies!

Even now appears before the mind's clear
eye

That self-same village church; I see her
sit

(The thronèd Lady whom erewhile we
hailed) 400

On her green hill, forgetful of this Boy
Who slumbers at her feet,—forgetful, too,
Of all her silent neighbourhood of graves,
And listening only to the glad sounds
That, from the rural school ascending,
play 405

Beneath her and about her. May she long
Behold a race of young ones like to those
With whom I herded!—(easily, indeed,
We might have fed upon a fatter soil
Of arts and letters—but be that for-
given)— 410

A race of real children; not too wise,
Too learned, or too good; but wanton,
fresh,

And banded up and down by love and
hate;

Not unresentful where self-justified;
Fierce, moody, patient, venturous, modest,
shy; 415

Mad at their sports like withered leaves
in winds;

Though doing wrong and suffering, and
full oft

Bending beneath our life's mysterious
weight

Of pain, and doubt, and fear, yet yielding
not

In happiness to the happiest upon earth.
Simplicity in habit, truth in speech, 421

Be these the daily strengtheners of their
minds;

May books and Nature be their early joy!

And knowledge, rightly honoured with
that name—

Knowledge not purchased by the loss of
power! 425

Well do I call to mind the very week
When I was first intrusted to the care
Of that sweet Valley; when its paths, its
shores,

And brooks were like a dream of novelty
To my half-infant thoughts; that very
week, 430

While I was roving up and down alone,
Seeking I knew not what, I chanced to cross
One of those open fields, which, shaped
like ears,

Make green peninsulas on Esthwaite's
Lake:

Twilight was coming on, yet through the
gloom 435

Appeared distinctly on the opposite shore
A heap of garments, as if left by one
Who might have there been bathing.

Long I watched,
But no one owned them; meanwhile the
calm lake

Grew dark with all the shadows on its
breast, 440

And, now and then, a fish up-leaping
snapped

The breathless stillness. The succeeding
day,

Those unclaimed garments telling a plain
tale

Drew to the spot an anxious crowd; some
looked

In passive expectation from the shore,
While from a boat others hung o'er the
deep, 446

Sounding with grappling irons and long
poles.

At last, the dead man, 'mid that beauteous
scene

Of trees and hills and water, bolt upright
Rose, with his ghastly face, a spectre
shape 450

Of terror; yet no soul-debasing fear,
Young as I was, a child not nine years old,

Possessed me, for my inner eye had seen
Such sights before, among the shining
streams

Of faery land, the forest of romance. 455

Their spirit hallowed the sad spectacle
With decoration of ideal grace;

A dignity, a smoothness, like the works
Of Grecian art, and purest poesy.

A precious treasure had I long pos-
sessed, 460

A little yellow, canvas-covered book,
A slender abstract of the Arabian tales;

And, from companions in a new abode,
When first I learnt, that this dear prize
of mine

Was but a block hewn from a mighty quarry—⁴⁶⁵

That there were four large volumes, laden all

With kindred matter, 'twas to me, in truth,

A promise scarcely earthly. Instantly, With one not richer than myself, I made A covenant that each should lay aside The moneys he possessed, and hoard up more,⁴⁷¹

Till our joint savings had amassed enough To make this book our own. Through several months,

In spite of all temptation, we preserved Religiously that vow; but firmness failed, Nor were we ever masters of our wish.

And when thereafter to my father's house⁴⁷⁷

The holidays returned me, there to find That golden store of books which I had left,

What joy was mine! How often in the course⁴⁸⁰

Of those glad respites, though a soft west wind

Ruffled the waters to the angler's wish, For a whole day together, have I lain

Down by thy side, O Derwent! murmuring stream,⁴⁸⁴

On the hot stones, and in the glaring sun, And there have read, devouring as I read, Defrauding the day's glory, desperate!

Till with a sudden bound of smart reproach,

Such as an idler deals with in his shame, I to the sport betook myself again.⁴⁹⁰

A gracious spirit o'er this earth presides,

And o'er the heart of man: invisibly It comes, to works of unreprieved delight, And tendency benign, directing those Who care not, know not, think not what they do.⁴⁹⁵

The tales that charm away the wakeful night

In Araby, romances; legends penned For solace by dim light of monkish lamps; Fictions, for ladies of their love, devised By youthful squires; adventures endless, spun⁵⁰⁰

By the dismantled warrior in old age, Out of the bowels of those very schemes In which his youth did first extravagate; These spread like day, and something in the shape

Of these will live till man shall be no more.⁵⁰⁵

Dumb yearnings, hidden appetites, are ours,

And *they must* have their food. Our childhood sits,

Our simple childhood, sits upon a throne That hath more power than all the elements.⁵⁰⁹

I guess not what this tells of Being past, Nor what it augurs of the life to come; But so it is, and, in that dubious hour, That twilight when we first begin to see This dawning earth, to recognise, expect, And, in the long probation that ensues, The time of trial, ere we learn to live In reconciliation with our stinted powers; To endure this state of meagre vassalage, Unwilling to forego, confess, submit, Uneasy and unsettled, yoke-fellows⁵²⁰

To custom, mettlesome, and not yet tamed And humbled down;—oh! then we feel, we feel,

We know where we have friends. Ye dreamers, then,

Forgers of daring tales! we bless you then, Impostors, drivellers, dotards, as the ape Philosophy will call you: *then* we feel

With what, and how great might ye are in league,⁵²⁷

Who make our wish our power, our thought a deed,

An empire, a possession,—ye whom time And seasons serve; all Faculties;—to whom⁵³⁰

Earth crouches, the elements are potter's clay,

Space like a heaven filled up with northern lights,

Here, nowhere, there, and everywhere at once.

Relinquishing this lofty eminence For ground, though humbler, not the less a tract⁵³⁵

Of the same isthmus, which our spirits cross

In progress from their native continent To earth and human life, the Song might dwell

On that delightful time of growing youth When craving for the marvellous gives way⁵⁴⁰

To strengthening love for things that we have seen;

When sober truth and steady sympathies, Offered to notice by less daring pens,

Take firmer hold of us, and words themselves

Move us with conscious pleasure. I am sad

At thought of raptures now for ever flown;⁵⁴⁶

Almost to tears I sometimes could be sad

To think of, to read over, many a page, Poems withal of name, which at that time

Did never fail to entrance me, and are now⁵⁵⁰

Dead in my eyes, dead as a theatre

THE PRELUDE

[BOOK V

Fresh emptied of spectators. Twice five
years
Or less I might have seen, when first my
mind
With conscious pleasure opened to the
charm
Of words in tuneful order, found them
sweet 555
For their own sakes, a passion, and a
power;
And phrases pleased me chosen for de-
light,
For pomp, or love. Oft, in the public
roads
Yet unfrequented, while the morning
light
Was yellowing the hill tops, I went
abroad 560
With a dear friend, and for the better
part
Of two delightful hours we strolled along
By the still borders of the misty lake,
Repeating favourite verses with one voice,
Or conning more, as happy as the birds
That round us chaunted. Well might we
be glad, 566
Lifted above the ground by airy fancies,
More bright than madness or the dreams
of wine;
And, though full oft the objects of our
love
Were false, and in their splendour over-
wrought, 570
Yet was there surely then no vulgar
power
Working within us,—nothing less, in
truth,
Than that most noble attribute of man,
Though yet untutored and inordinate,
That wish for something loftier, more
adorned, 575

Than is the common aspect, daily garb,
Of human life. What wonder, then, if
sounds
Of exultation echoed through the groves!
For, images, and sentiments, and words,
And everything encountered or pursued
In that delicious world of poesy, 581
Kept holiday, a never-ending show,
With music, incense, festival, and flowers!

Here must we pause: this only let me
add,
From heart-experience, and in humblest
sense 585
Of modesty, that he, who in his youth
A daily wanderer among woods and fields
With living Nature hath been intimate,
Not only in that raw unpractised time
Is stirred to ecstasy, as others are, 590
By glittering verse; but further, doth
receive,
In measure only dealt out to himself,
Knowledge and increase of enduring joy
From the great Nature that exists in
works
Of mighty Poets. Visionary power 595
Attends the motions of the viewless winds,
Embodied in the mystery of words:
There, darkness makes abode, and all the
host
Of shadowy things work endless changes,
—there, 599
As in a mansion like their proper home,
Even forms and substances are circum-
fused
By that transparent veil with light divine,
And, through the turnings intricate of
verse,
Present themselves as objects recognised,
In flashes, and with glory not their
own. 605

BOOK SIXTH

CAMBRIDGE AND THE ALPS

THE leaves were fading when to Esth-
waite's banks
And the simplicities of cottage life
I bade farewell; and, one among the
youth
Who, summoned by that season, reunite
As scattered birds troop to the fowler's
lure, 5
Went back to Granta's cloisters, not so
prompt
Or eager, though as gay and undepressed
In mind, as when I thence had taken flight
A few short months before. I turned my
face
Without repining from the coves and
heights 10

Clothed in the sunshine of the withering
fern;
Quitted, not loth, the mild magnifi-
cence
Of calmer lakes and louder streams; and
you,
Frank-hearted maids of rocky Cumber-
land,
You and your not unwelcome days of
mirth 15
Relinquished, and your nights of revelry,
And in my own unlovely cell sate down
In lightsome mood—such privilege has
youth
That cannot take long leave of pleasant
thoughts.

The bonds of indolent society 20
Relaxing in their hold, henceforth I lived
More to myself. Two winters may be

Though not familiarly, my mind put on,
Content to observe, to achieve, and to
enjoy. 65

Without a separate notice: many books
Were skimmed, devoured, or studiously
perused,

But with no settled plan. I was detached
Internally from academic cares; 26
Yet independent study seemed a course
Of hardy disobedience towards friends
And kindred, proud rebellion and unkind.
This spurious virtue, rather let it bear 30
A name it more deserves, this cowardice,
Gave treacherous sanction to that over-
love

Of freedom which encouraged me to turn
From regulations even of my own
As from restraints and bonds. Yet who
can tell— 35

Who knows what thus may have been
gained, both then

And at a later season, or preserved;
What love of nature, what original
strength

Of contemplation, what intuitive truths,
The deepest and the best, what keen
research, 40

'Unbiased, unbewildered, and unawed?

The Poet's soul was with me at that
time;

Sweet meditations, the still overflow
Of present happiness, while future years
Lacked not anticipations, tender dreams,
No few of which have since been realised;
And some remain, hopes for my future
life. 47

Four years and thirty, told this very
week,

Have I been now a sojourner on earth,
By sorrow not unsmitten; yet for me 50
Life's morning radiance hath not left the
hills,

Her dew is on the flowers. Those were
the days

Which also first emboldened me to trust
With firmness, hitherto but lightly
touched

By such a daring thought, that I might
leave 55

Some monument behind me which pure
hearts

Should reverence. The instinctive hum-
bleness, ✕

Maintained even by the very name and
thought

Of printed books and authorship, began
To melt away; and further, the dread
awe 60

Of mighty names was softened down and
seemed

Approachable, admitting fellowship
Of modest sympathy. Such aspect now,

All winter long, whenever free to
choose,

Did I by night frequent the College
groves

And tributary walks; the last, and oft
The only one, who had been lingering
there

Through hours of silence, till the porter's
bell, 70

A punctual follower on the stroke of nine,
Rang with its blunt unceremonious voice,
Inexorable summons! Lofty elms,
Inviting shades of opportune recess,
Bestowed composure on a neighbourhood
Unpeaceful in itself. A single tree 76

With sinuous trunk, boughs exquisitely
wreathed,

Grew there; an ash which Winter for
himself

Decked as in pride, and with outlandish
grace:

Up from the ground, and almost to the
top, 80

The trunk and every master branch were
green

With clustering ivy, and the lightsome
twigs

And outer spray profusely tipped with
seeds

That hung in yellow tassels, while the air
Stirred them, not voiceless. Often have
I stood 85

Foot-bound uplooking at this lovely tree
Beneath a frosty moon. The hemisphere
Of magic fiction, verse of mine perchance
May never tread; but scarcely Spenser's
self

Could have more tranquil visions in his
youth, 90

Or could more bright appearances create
Of human forms with superhuman
powers,

Than I beheld loitering on calm clear
nights

Alone, beneath this fairy work of earth.

On the vague reading of a truant youth
'Twere idle to descant. My inner judg-
ment 96

Not seldom differed from my taste in
books,

As if it appertained to another mind,
And yet the books which then I valued
most

Are dearest to me now; for, having
scanned, 100

Not heedlessly, the laws, and watched
the forms

Of Nature, in that knowledge I possessed
A standard, often usefully applied,

THE PRELUDE

[BOOK VI

Even when unconsciously, to things removed
 From a familiar sympathy.—In fine, 105
 I was a better judge of thoughts than words,
 Misled in estimating words, not only
 By common inexperience of youth,
 But by the trade in classic niceties,
 The dangerous craft of culling term and phrase 110
 From languages that want the living voice
 To carry meaning to the natural heart;
 To tell us what is passion, what is truth,
 What reason, what simplicity and sense.

Yet may we not entirely overlook 115
 The pleasure gathered from the rudiments
 Of geometric science. Though advanced
 In these enquiries, with regret I speak,
 No farther than the threshold, there I found
 Both elevation and composed delight:
 With Indian awe and wonder, ignorance pleased 121
 With its own struggles, did I meditate
 On the relation those abstractions bear
 To Nature's laws, and by what process led,
 Those immaterial agents bowed their heads 125
 Duly to serve the mind of earth-born man;
 From star to star, from kindred sphere to sphere,
 From system on to system without end.

More frequently from the same source
 I drew
 A pleasure quiet and profound, a sense
 Of permanent and universal sway, 131
 And paramount belief; there, recognised
 A type, for finite natures, of the one
 Supreme Existence, the surpassing life
 Which—to the boundaries of space and time, 135
 Of melancholy space and doleful time,
 Superior, and incapable of change,
 Nor touched by welterings of passion—is,
 And hath the name of, God. Transcendent peace
 And silence did await upon these thoughts
 That were a frequent comfort to my youth. 141

'Tis told by one whom stormy waters threw,
 With fellow-sufferers by the shipwreck spared,
 Upon a desert coast, that having brought
 To land a single volume, saved by chance,
 A treatise of Geometry, he went, 146
 Although of food and clothing destitute,
 And beyond common wretchedness depressed,
 To part from company and take this book

(Then first a self-taught pupil in its truths) 150
 To spots remote, and draw his diagrams
 With a long staff upon the sand, and thus
 Did oft beguile his sorrow, and almost
 Forget his feeling: so (if like effect
 From the same cause produced, 'mid outward things 155
 So different, may rightly be compared),
 So was it then with me, and so will be
 With Poets ever. Mighty is the charm
 Of those abstractions to a mind beset
 With images, and haunted by herself,
 And specially delightful unto me 161
 Was that clear synthesis built up aloft
 So gracefully; even then when it appeared
 Not more than a mere plaything, or a toy
 To sense embodied: not the thing it is
 In verity, an independent world, 166
 Created out of pure intelligence.

Such dispositions then were mine un-
 earned
 By aught, I fear, of genuine desert—
 Mine, through heaven's grace and inborn aptitudes. 170
 And not to leave the story of that time
 Imperfect, with these habits must be joined
 Moods melancholy, fits of spleen, that loved
 A pensive sky, sad days, and piping winds,
 The twilight more than dawn, autumn than spring; 175
 A treasured and luxurious gloom of choice
 And inclination mainly, and the mere
 Redundancy of youth's contentedness.
 —To time thus spent, add multitudes of hours
 Pilfered away, by what the Bard who sang 180
 Of the Enchanter Indolence hath called
 'Good-natured lounging,' and behold a map
 Of my collegiate life—far less intense
 Than duty called for, or, without regard
 To duty, *might* have sprung up of itself
 By change of accidents, or even, to speak 186
 Without unkindness, in another place.
 Yet why take refuge in that plea?—the fault,
 This I repeat, was mine; mine be the blame.

In summer, making quest for works of art, 190
 Or scenes renowned for beauty, I explored
 That streamlet whose blue current works its way
 Between romantic Dovedale's spiry rocks;
 Pried into Yorkshire dales, or hidden tracts

Of my own native region, and was blest
Between these sundry wanderings with
a joy 196

Above all joys, that seemed another morn
Risen on mid noon; blest with the
presence, Friend!

Of that sole Sister, her who hath been long
Dear to thee also, thy true friend and
mine, 200

Now, after separation desolate,
Restored to me—such absence that she
seemed

A gift then first bestowed. The varied
banks

Of Emont, hitherto unnamed in song,
And that monastic castle, 'mid tall trees,
Low-standing by the margin of the stream,
A mansion visited (as fame reports) 207
By Sidney, where, in sight of our Helvellyn,
Or stormy Cross-fell, snatches he might
pen

Of his Arcadia, by fraternal love 210
Inspired;—that river and those mouldering
towers

Have seen us side by side, when, having
clomb

The darksome windings of a broken stair,
And crept along a ridge of fractured wall,
Not without trembling, we in safety
looked 215

Forth, through some Gothic window's
open space,

And gathered with one mind a rich reward
From the far-stretching landscape, by
the light

Of morning beautified, or purple eve;
Or, not less pleased, lay on some turret's
head, 220

Catching from tufts of grass and hare-
bell flowers

Their faintest whisper to the passing
breeze,

Given out while mid-day heat oppressed
the plains.

Another maid there was, who also shed
A gladness o'er that season, then to me,
By her exulting outside look of youth
And placid under-countenance, first en-
deared; 227

That other spirit, Coleridge! who is now
So near to us, that meek confiding heart,
So revered by us both. O'er paths and
fields 230

In all that neighbourhood, through nar-
row lanes

Of eglantine, and through the shady
woods,

And o'er the Border Beacon, and the
waste

Of naked pools, and common crags that
lay

Exposed on the bare fell, were scattered
love, 235

The spirit of pleasure, and youth's golden
gleam.

O Friend! we had not seen thee at that
time,

And yet a power is on me, and a strong
Confusion, and I seem to plant thee there.

Far art thou wandered now in search of
health 240

And milder breezes,—melancholy lot!
But thou art with us, with us in the
past,

The present, with us in the times to come.
There is no grief, no sorrow, no despair,
No languor, no dejection, no dismay, 245

No absence scarcely can there be, for those
Who love as we do. Speed thee well!
divide

With us thy pleasure; thy returning
strength,

Receive it daily as a joy of ours;
Share with us thy fresh spirits, whether
gift 250

Of gales Etesian or of tender thoughts.

I, too, have been a wanderer; but, alas!
How different the fate of different men.

Though mutually unknown, yea, nursed
and reared 254

As if in several elements, we were framed
To bend at last to the same discipline,

Predestined, if two beings ever were,
To seek the same delights, and have one
health,

One happiness. Throughout this narra-
tive,

Else sooner ended, I have borne in mind
For whom it registers the birth, and
marks the growth, 261

Of gentleness, simplicity, and truth,
And joyous loves, that hallow innocent
days

Of peace and self-command. Of rivers,
fields,

And groves I speak to thee, my Friend!
to thee, 265

Who, yet a liveried schoolboy, in the
depths

Of the huge city, on the leaded roof
Of that wide edifice, thy school and home,

Wert used to lie and gaze upon the clouds
Moving in heaven; or, of that pleasure
tired, 270

To shut thine eyes, and by internal light
See trees, and meadows, and thy native
stream,

Far distant, thus beheld from year to year
Of a long exile. Nor could I forget,

In this late portion of my argument, 275
That scarcely, as my term of pupilage
Ceased, had I left those academic bowers

When thou wert thither guided. From
the heart

Of London, and from cloisters there, thou
camest,

THE PRELUDE

[BOOK VI

And didst sit down in temperance and
peace, 280

A rigorous student. What a stormy
course

Then followed. Oh! it is a pang that calls
For utterance, to think what easy change
Of circumstances might to thee have
spared

A world of pain, ripened a thousand
hopes, 285

For ever withered. Through this retro-
spect

Of my collegiate life I still have had
Thy after-sojourn in the self-same place

Present before my eyes, have played with
times

And accidents as children do with cards,
Or as a man, who, when his house is
built, 291

A frame locked up in wood and stone,
doth still,

As impotent fancy prompts, by his fire-
side,

Rebuild it to his liking. I have thought
Of thee, thy learning, gorgeous eloquence,
And all the strength and plumage of thy
youth, 296

Thy subtle speculations, toils abstruse
Among the schoolmen, and Platonic forms
Of wild ideal pageantry, shaped out

From things well-matched or ill, and
words for things, 300

The self-created sustenance of a mind
Debarred from Nature's living images,
Compelled to be a life unto herself,

And unrelentingly possessed by thirst
Of greatness, love, and beauty. Not alone,

Ah! surely not in singleness of heart 306

Should I have seen the light of evening
fade

From smooth Cam's silent waters: had
we met,

Even at that early time, needs must I
trust

In the belief, that my maturer age, 310

My calmer habits, and more steady voice,
Would with an influence benign have
soothed,

Or chased away, the airy wretchedness
That battered on thy youth. But thou
hast trod

A march of glory, which doth put to
shame 315

These vain regrets; health suffers in thee,
else

Such grief for thee would be the weakest
thought

That ever harboured in the breast of man.

A passing word erewhile did lightly
touch

On wanderings of my own, that now
embraced 320

With livelier hope a region wider far.

When the third summer freed us from
restraint,

A youthful friend, he too a mountaineer,
Not slow to share my wishes, took his
staff,

And sailing forth, we journeyed side by
side, 325

Bound to the distant Alps. A hardy slight
Did this unprecedented course imply

Of college studies and their set rewards;
Nor had, in truth, the scheme been formed
by me 329

Without uneasy forethought of the pain,
The censures, and ill-omening of those
To whom my worldly interests were dear.

But Nature then was sovereign in my
mind,

And mighty forms, seizing a youthful
fancy, 334

Had given a charter to irregular hopes.
In any age of uneventful calm

Among the nations, surely would my
heart

Have been possessed by similar desire;
But Europe at that time was thrilled with
joy,

France standing on the top of golden
hours, 340

And human nature seeming born again.

Lightly equipped, and but a few brief
looks

Cast on the white cliffs of our native shore
From the receding vessel's deck, we
chanced

To land at Calais on the very eve 345

Of that great federal day; and there we
saw,

In a mean city, and among a few,
How bright a face is worn when joy of one
Is joy for tens of millions. Southward
thence

We held our way, direct through hamlets,
towns, 350

Gaudy with reliques of that festival,
Flowers left to wither on triumphal arcs,
And window-garlands. On the public
roads,

And, once, three days successively,
through paths

By which our toilsome journey was
abridged, 355

Among sequestered villages we walked
And found benevolence and blessedness

Spread like a fragrance everywhere, when
spring

Hath left no corner of the land un-
touched:

Where elms for many and many a league
in files 360

With their thin umbrage, on the stately
roads

Of that great kingdom, rustled o'er our
heads,

For ever near us as we paced along:
 How sweet at such a time, with such
 delight
 On every side, in prime of youthful
 strength, 365
 To feed a Poet's tender melancholy
 And fond conceit of sadness, with the
 sound
 Of undulations varying as might please
 The wind that swayed them; once, and
 more than once,
 Unhoused beneath the evening star we
 saw 370
 Dances of liberty, and, in late hours
 Of darkness, dances in the open air
 Deftly prolonged, though grey-haired
 lookers on
 Might waste their breath in chiding.
 Under hills—
 The vine-clad hills and slopes of Bur-
 gundy, 375
 Upon the bosom of the gentle Saone
 We glided forward with the flowing
 stream.
 Swift Rhone! thou wert the *wings* on
 which we cut
 A winding passage with majestic ease
 Between thy lofty rocks. Enchanting
 show 380
 Those woods and farms and orchards did
 present,
 And single cottages and lurking towns,
 Reach after reach, succession without end
 Of deep and stately vales! A lonely pair
 Of strangers, till day closed, we sailed
 along, 385
 Clustered together with a merry crowd
 Of those emancipated, a blithe host
 Of travellers, chiefly delegates returning
 From the great spousals newly solemnized
 At their chief city, in the sight of Heaven.
 Like bees they swarmed, gaudy and gay
 as bees; 391
 Some vapoured in the unruliness of joy,
 And with their swords flourished as if to
 fight
 The saucy air. In this proud company
 We landed—took with them our evening
 meal, 395
 Guests welcome almost as the angels were
 To Abraham of old. The supper done,
 With flowing cups elate and happy
 thoughts
 We rose at signal given, and formed a
 ring
 And, hand in hand, danced round and
 round the board; 400
 All hearts were open, every tongue was
 loud
 With amity and glee; we bore a name
 Honoured in France, the name of English-
 men,
 And hospitably did they give us hail,
 As their forerunners in a glorious course;

And round and round the board we
 danced again. 406
 With these blithe friends our voyage we
 renewed
 At early dawn. The monastery bells
 Made a sweet jingling in our youthful
 ears; 409
 The rapid river flowing without noise,
 And each uprising or receding spire
 Spake with a sense of peace, at intervals
 Touching the heart amid the boisterous
 crew
 By whom we were encompassed. Taking
 leave
 Of this glad throng, foot-travellers side
 by side, 415
 Measuring our steps in quiet, we pursued
 Our journey, and ere twice the sun had
 set
 Beheld the Convent of Chartreuse, and
 there
 Rested within an awful *solitude*: 419
 Yes; for even then no other than a place
 Of soul-affecting *solitude* appeared
 That far-famed region, though our eyes
 had seen,
 As toward the sacred mansion we ad-
 vanced,
 Arms flashing, and a military glare 424
 Of riotous men commissioned to expel
 The blameless inmates, and belike subvert
 That frame of social being, which so long
 Had bodied forth the ghostliness of
 things
 In silence visible and perpetual calm.
 —‘Stay, stay your sacrilegious hands!’—
 The voice 430
 Was Nature's, uttered from her Alpine
 throne;
 I heard it then, and seem to hear it now—
 ‘Your impious work forbear: perish what
 may,
 Let this one temple last, be this one spot
 Of earth devoted to eternity!’ 435
 She ceased to speak, but while St. Bruno's
 pines
 Waved their dark tops, not silent as they
 waved,
 And while below, along their several beds,
 Murmured the sister streams of Life and
 Death,
 Thus by conflicting passions pressed, my
 heart 440
 Responded; ‘Honour to the patriot's zeal!
 Glory and hope to new-born Liberty!
 Hail to the mighty projects of the time!
 Discerning sword that Justice wields, do
 thou
 Go forth and prosper; and, ye purging
 fires, 445
 Up to the loftiest towers of Pride ascend,
 Fanned by the breath of angry Provi-
 dence.
 But oh! if Past and Future be the wings

THE PRELUDE

[BOOK VI

On whose support harmoniously con-
joined
Moves the great spirit of human know-
ledge, spare 450
These courts of mystery, where a step
advanced
Between the portals of the shadowy rocks
Leaves far behind life's treacherous vani-
ties,
For penitential tears and trembling hopes
Exchanged—to equalise in God's pure
sight 455
Monarch and peasant: be the house
redeemed
With its unworldly votaries, for the sake
Of conquest over sense, hourly achieved
Through faith and meditative reason,
resting
Upon the word of heaven-imparted truth,
Calmly triumphant; and for humbler
claim 461
Of that imaginative impulse sent
From these majestic floods, yon shining
cliffs,
The untransmuted shapes of many worlds,
Cerulean ether's pure inhabitants, 465
These forests unapproachable by death,
That shall endure as long as man endures,
To think, to hope, to worship, and to feel,
To struggle, to be lost within himself
In trepidation, from the blank abyss 470
To look with bodily eyes, and be con-
soled.
Not seldom since that moment have I
wished
That thou, O Friend! the trouble or the
calm
Hadst shared, when, from profane regards
apart,
In sympathetic reverence we trod 475
The floors of those dim cloisters, till that
hour,
From their foundation, strangers to the
presence
Of unrestricted and unthinking man.
Abroad, how cheerily the sunshine lay
Upon the open lawns! Vallombre's groves
Entering, we fed the soul with darkness;
thence 481
Issued, and with uplifted eyes beheld,
In different quarters of the bending sky,
The cross of Jesus stand erect, as if
Hands of angelic powers had fixed it
there, 485
Memorial revered by a thousand
storms;
Yet then, from the indiscriminating
sweep
And rage of one State-whirlwind, in-
secure.
'Tis not my present purpose to retrace
That variegated journey step by step. 490
A march it was of military speed,
And Earth did change her images and
forms
Before us, fast as clouds are changed in
heaven.
Day after day, up early and down late,
From hill to vale we dropped, from vale
to hill 495
Mounted—from province on to province
swept,
Keen hunters in a chase of fourteen weeks,
Eager as birds of prey, or as a ship
Upon the stretch, when winds are blow-
ing fair: 499
Sweet coverts did we cross of pastoral life,
Enticing valleys, greeted them and left
Too soon, while yet the very flash and
gleam
Of salutation were not passed away.
Oh! sorrow for the youth who could have
seen
Unchastened, unsubdued, unawed, un-
raised 505
To patriarchal dignity of mind,
And pure simplicity of wish and will,
Those sanctified abodes of peaceful man,
Pleased (though to hardship born, and
compassed round
With danger, varying as the seasons
change), 510
Pleased with his daily task, or, if not
pleased,
Contented, from the moment that the
dawn
(Ah! surely not without attendant gleams
Of soul-illumination) calls him forth
To industry, by glistenings flung on rocks,
Whose evening shadows lead him to re-
pose. 516
Well might a stranger look with bound-
ing heart
Down on a green recess, the first I saw
Of those deep haunts, an aboriginal vale,
Quiet and lorded over and possessed 520
By naked huts, wood-built, and sown like
tents
Or Indian cabins over the fresh lawns
And by the river side.
That very day,
From a bare ridge we also first beheld
Unveiled the summit of Mont Blanc, and
grieved 525
To have a soulless image on the eye
That had usurped upon a living thought
That never more could be. The wondrous
Vale
Of Chamouny stretched far below, and
soon
With its dumb cataracts and streams of
ice, 530
A motionless array of mighty waves,
Five rivers broad and vast, made rich
amends,
And reconciled us to realities;

There small birds warble from the leafy trees,
 The eagle soars high in the clement, 535
 There doth the reaper bind the yellow sheaf,
 The maiden spread the haycock in the sun,
 While Winter like a well-tamed lion walks,
 Descending from the mountain to make sport 539
 Among the cottages by beds of flowers.

Whate'er in this wide circuit we beheld,
 Or heard, was fitted to our unripe state
 Of intellect and heart. With such a book
 Before our eyes, we could not choose but read
 Lessons of genuine brotherhood, the plain
 And universal reason of mankind, 546
 The truths of young and old. Nor, side by side
 Pacing, two social pilgrims, or alone
 Each with his humour, could we fail to abound
 In dreams and fictions, pensively composed: 550
 Dejection taken up for pleasure's sake,
 And gilded sympathies, the willow wreath,
 And sober posies of funereal flowers,
 Gathered among those solitudes sublime
 From formal gardens of the lady Sorrow,
 Did sweeten many a meditative hour. 556

Yet still in me with those soft luxuries
 Mixed something of stern mood, an under-thirst
 Of vigour seldom utterly allayed:
 And from that source how different a sadness 560
 Would issue, let one incident make known.
 When from the Vallais we had turned,
 and clomb
 Along the Simplon's steep and rugged road,
 Following a band of muleteers, we reached
 A halting-place, where all together took
 Their noon-tide meal. Hastily rose our guide, 566
 Leaving us at the board; awhile we lingered,
 Then paced the beaten downward way
 that led
 Right to a rough stream's edge, and there broke off;
 The only track now visible was one 570
 That from the torrent's further brink held forth
 Conspicuous invitation to ascend
 A lofty mountain. After brief delay
 Crossing the unbridged stream, that road
 we took,
 And clomb with eagerness, till anxious fears 575
 Intruded, for we failed to overtake

Our comrades gone before. By fortunate chance,
 While every moment added doubt to doubt,
 A peasant met us, from whose mouth we learned
 That to the spot which had perplexed us first 580
 We must descend, and there should find the road,
 Which in the stony channel of the stream
 Lay a few steps, and then along its banks;
 And, that our future course, all plain to sight,
 Was downwards, with the current of that stream. 585
 Loth to believe what we so grieved to hear,
 For still we had hopes that pointed to the clouds,
 We questioned him again, and yet again;
 But every word that from the peasant's lips
 Came in reply, translated by our feelings,
 Ended in this,—that we had crossed the Alps. 591

Imagination—here the Power so called
 Through sad incompetence of human speech,
 That awful Power rose from the mind's abyss 594
 Like an unfathered vapour that enwraps,
 At once, some lonely traveller. I was lost;
 Halted without an effort to break through;
 But to my conscious soul I now can say—
 'I recognise thy glory:' in such strength
 Of usurpation, when the light of sense
 Goes out, but with a flash that has revealed 601
 The invisible world, doth greatness make abode,
 There harbours; whether we be young or old,
 Our destiny, our being's heart and home,
 Is with infinitude, and only there; 605
 With hope it is, hope that can never die,
 Effort, and expectation, and desire,
 And something evermore about to be.
 Under such banners militant, the soul
 Seeks for no trophies, struggles for no spoils 610
 That may attest her prowess, blest in thoughts
 That are their own perfection and reward,
 Strong in herself and in beatitude
 That hides her, like the mighty flood of Nile
 Poured from his fount of Abyssinian clouds 615
 To fertilise the whole Egyptian plain.

The melancholy slackening that ensued
 Upon those tidings by the peasant given
 Was soon dislodged. Downwards we hurried fast,

THE PRELUDE

[BOOK VI

And, with the half-shaped road which we
had missed, 620
Entered a narrow chasm. ¹The brook and
road

Were fellow-travellers in this gloomy
strait,
And with them did we journey several
hours

At a slow pace. The immeasurable height
Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
The stationary blasts of waterfalls, 626
And in the narrow rent at every turn
Winds thwarting winds, bewildered and
forlorn,

The torrents shooting from the clear blue
sky

The rocks that muttered close upon our
ears, 630

Black drizzling crags that spake by the
way-side

As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
And giddy prospect of the raving stream,
The unfettered clouds and region of the
Heavens,

Tumult and peace, the darkness and the
light— 635

Were all like workings of one mind, the
features

Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree;
Characters of the great Apocalypse,
The types and symbols of Eternity,

Of first, and last, and midst, and without
end. 640

That night our lodging was a house that
stood

Alone, within the valley, at a point
Where, tumbling from aloft, a torrent
swelled

The rapid stream whose margin we had
trod;

A dreary mansion, large beyond all need,
With high and spacious rooms, deafened
and stunned 646

By noise of waters, making innocent sleep
Lie melancholy among weary bones.

Uprisen betimes, our journey we re-
newed,

Led by the stream, ere noon-day magni-
fied 650

Into a lordly river, broad and deep,
Dimpling along in silent majesty,
With mountains for its neighbours, and
in view

Of distant mountains and their snowy
tops,

And thus proceeding to Locarno's Lake,
Fit resting-place for such a visitant. 656

Locarno! spreading out in width like
Heaven,

How dost thou cleave to the poetic heart,
Bask in the sunshine of the memory;

¹ See page 147.

And Como! thou, a treasure whom the
earth 660

Keeps to herself, confined as in a depth
Of Abyssinian privacy. I spake

Of thee, thy chestnut woods, and garden
plots

Of Indian corn tended by dark-eyed
maids;

Thy lofty steepes, and pathways roofed
with vines, 665

Winding from house to house, from town
to town,

Sole link that binds them to each other;
walks,

League after league, and cloistral avenues,
Where silence dwells if music be not there:

While yet a youth undisciplined in verse,
Through fond ambition of that hour, I
strove 671

To chant your praise; nor can approach
you now

Ungreeted by a more melodious Song,
Where tones of Nature smoothed by
learned Art

May flow in lasting current. Like a
breeze 675

Or sunbeam over your domain I passed
In motion without pause; but ye have left

Your beauty with me, a serene accord
Of forms and colours, passive, yet en-
dowed

In their submissiveness with power as
sweet 680

And gracious, almost might I dare to say,
As virtue is, or goodness; sweet as love,

Or the remembrance of a generous deed,
Or mildest visitations of pure thought,

When God, the giver of all joy, is thanked
Religiously, in silent blessedness; 686

Sweet as this last herself, for such it is.

With those delightful pathways we ad-
vanced,

For two days' space, in presence of the
Lake,

That, stretching far among the Alps,
assumed 690

A character more stern. The second
night,

From sleep awakened, and misled by
sound

Of the church clock telling the hours with
strokes

Whose import then we had not learned,
we rose

By moonlight, doubting not that day was
nigh, 695

And that meanwhile, by no uncertain
path,

Along the winding margin of the lake,
Led, as before, we should behold the
scene,

Hushed in profound repose. We left the
town

Of Gravedona with this hope; but soon
Were lost, bewildered among woods im-
mense, 701

And on a rock sate down, to wait for
day.

An open place it was, and overlooked,
From high, the sullen water far beneath,
On which a dull red image of the moon
Lay bedded, changing oftentimes its form
Like an uneasy snake. From hour to hour
We sate and sate, wondering as if the
night

Had been ensnared by witchcraft. On
the rock

At last we stretched our weary limbs for
sleep, 710

But *could not* sleep, tormented by the
stings

Of insects, which with noise like that of
noon

Filled all the woods: the cry of unknown
birds;

The mountains more by blackness visible
And their own size, than any outward
light; 715

The breathless wilderness of clouds; the
clock

That told, with unintelligible voice,
The widely parted hours; the noise of
streams,

And sometimes rustling motions nigh at
hand,

That did not leave us free from personal
fear; 720

And, lastly, the withdrawing moon, that
set

Before us, while she still was high in
heaven;—

These were our food; and such a summer's
night

Followed that pair of golden days that
shed

On Como's Lake, and all that round it
lay, 725

Their fairest, softest, happiest influence.

But here I must break off, and bid
farewell

To days, each offering some new sight, or
fraught

With some untried adventure, in a course
Prolonged till sprinklings of autumnal
snow 730

Checked our unwearied steps. Let this
alone

Be mentioned as a parting word, that not
In hollow exultation, dealing out

Hyperboles of praise comparative; 734

Not rich one moment to be poor for ever;
Not prostrate, overborne, as if the mind

Herself were nothing, a mere pensioner
On outward forms—did we in presence
stand

Of that magnificent region. On the front
Of this whole Song is written that my
heart 740

Must, in such Temple, needs have offered
up

A different worship. Finally, whatever
I saw, or heard, or felt, was but a stream

That flowed into a kindred stream; a gale,
Confederate with the current of the soul,

To speed my voyage; every sound or
sight, 746

In its degree of power, administered
To grandeur or to tenderness,—to the one

Directly, but to tender thoughts by means
Less often instantaneous in effect; 750

Led me to these by paths that, in the
main,

Were more circuitous, but not less sure
Duly to reach the point marked out by
Heaven.

Oh, most beloved Friend! a glorious
time,

A happy time that was; triumphant looks
Were then the common language of all
eyes; 756

As if awaked from sleep, the Nations
hailed

Their great expectancy: the life of war
Was then a spirit-stirring sound indeed,

A blackbird's whistle in a budding grove.
We left the Swiss exulting in the fate 761

Of their near neighbours; and, when
shortening fast

Our pilgrimage, nor distant far from
home,

We crossed the Brabant armies on the
fret

For battle in the cause of Liberty. 765

A stripling, scarcely of the household
then

Of social life, I looked upon these things
As from a distance; heard, and saw, and
felt,

Was touched, but with no intimate con-
cern; 769

I seemed to move along them, as a bird
Moves through the air, or as a fish pursues

Its sport, or feeds in its proper element;
I wanted not that joy, I did not need

Such help; the ever-living universe,
Turn where I might, was opening out its
glories, 775

And the independent spirit of pure youth
Called forth, at every season, new delights

Spread round my steps like sunshine o'er
green fields.

BOOK SEVENTH

RESIDENCE IN LONDON

Six changeful years have vanished since
 I first
Poured out (saluted by that quickening
 breeze
Which met me issuing from the City's
 walls)
A glad preamble to this Verse: I sang
 Aloud, with fervour irresistible 5
Of short-lived transport, like a torrent
 bursting,
From a black thunder-cloud, down
 Scaffell's side
To rush and disappear. But soon broke
 forth
 (So willed the Muse) a less impetuous
 stream,
That flowed awhile with unabating
 strength, 10
Then stopped for years; not audible again
 Before last primrose-time. Belovèd Friend!
The assurance which then cheered some
 heavy thoughts
On thy departure to a foreign land
 Has failed; too slowly moves the promised
 work. 15
Through the whole summer have I been
 at rest,
Partly from voluntary holiday,
 And part through outward hindrance.
 But I heard,
After the hour of sunset yester-even,
 Sitting within doors between light and
 dark, 20
A choir of redbreasts gathered somewhere
 near
My threshold,—minstrels from the distant
 woods
Sent in on Winter's service, to announce,
 With preparation artful and benign,
That the rough lord had left the surly
 North 25
On his accustomed journey. The delight,
 Due to this timely notice, unawares
 Smote me, and, listening, I in whispers
 said,
 'Ye heartsome Choristers, ye and I will
 be
 Associates, and, unscared by blustering
 winds, 30
Will chant together.' Thereafter, as the
 shades
Of twilight deepened, going forth, I spied
 A glow-worm underneath a dusky plume
 Or canopy of yet unwithered fern,
 Clear-shining, like a hermit's taper seen
Through a thick forest. Silence touched
 me here 36
No less than sound had done before; the
 child

Of Summer, lingering, shining, by her-
 self,
 The voiceless worm on the unfrequented
 hills,
 Seemed sent on the same errand with the
 choir 40
Of Winter that had warbled at my door,
 And the whole year breathed tenderness
 and love.
 The last night's genial feeling over-
 flowed
 Upon this morning, and my favourite
 grove,
 Tossing in sunshine its dark boughs
 aloft, 45
 As if to make the strong wind visible,
 Wakes in me agitations like its own,
 A spirit friendly to the Poet's task,
 Which we will now resume with lively
 hope, 49
 Nor checked by aught of tamer argument,
 That lies before us, needful to be told.
 Returned from that excursion,¹ soon I
 bade
 Farewell for ever to the sheltered seats
 Of gowned students, quitted hall and
 bower,
 And every comfort of that privileged
 ground, 55
 Well pleased to pitch a vagrant tent
 among
 The unfenced regions of society.
 Yet, undetermined to what course of
 life
 I should adhere, and seeming to possess
 A little space of intermediate time 60
 At full command, to London first I turned,
 In no disturbance of excessive hope,
 By personal ambition unenslaved,
 Frugal as there was need, and, though self-
 willed,
 From dangerous passions free. Three
 years had flown 65
 Since I had felt in heart and soul the shock
 Of the huge town's first presence, and had
 paced
 Her endless streets, a transient visitant:
 Now, fixed amid that concourse of man-
 kind 69
 Where Pleasure whirls about incessantly,
 And life and labour seem but one, I filled
 An idler's place; an idler well content
 To have a house (what matter for a home?)
 That owned him; living cheerfully abroad
 With unchecked fancy ever on the stir, 75
 And all my young affections out of doors.

¹ See page 532

There was a time when whatsoe'er is
feigned

Of airy palaces, and gardens built
By Genii of romance; or hath in grave
Authentic history been set forth of Rome,
Alcaïro, Babylon, or Persepolis; 81
Or given upon report by pilgrim friars,
Of golden cities ten months' journey deep
Among Tartarian wilds—fell short, far
short,

Of what my fond simplicity believed 85
And thought of London—held me by a
chain

Less strong of wonder and obscure de-
light.

Whether the bolt of childhood's Fancy
shot

For me beyond its ordinary mark,
'Twere vain to ask; but in our flock of
boys 90

Was One, a cripple from his birth, whom
chance

Summoned from school to London; for-
tunate

And envied traveler! When the Boy
returned,

After short absence, curiously I scanned
His mien and person, nor was free, in
sooth, 95

From disappointment, not to find some
change

In look and air, from that new region
brought,

As if from Fairy-land. Much I questioned
him;

And every word he uttered, on my ears
Fell flatter than a caged parrot's note, 100

That answers unexpectedly awry,
And mocks the prompter's listening.

Marvellous things

Had vanity (quick Spirit that appears
Almost as deeply seated and as strong

In a Child's heart as fear itself) conceived
For my enjoyment. Would that I could
now 106

Recall what then I pictured to myself,
Of mitred Prelates, Lords in ermine clad,

The King, and the King's Palace, and,
not last,

Nor least, Heaven bless him! the re-
nowned Lord Mayor: 110

Dreams not unlike to those which once
began

A change of purpose in young Whitting-
ton,

When he, a friendless and a drooping boy,
Sat on a stone, and heard the bells speak
out 114

Articulate music. Above all, one thought
Baffled my understanding: how men lived

Even next-door neighbours, as we say, yet
still

Strangers, not knowing each the other's
name.

O, wond'rous power of words, by simple
faith 119

Licensed to take the meaning that we love!
Vauxhall and Ranelagh! I then had heard

Of your green groves, and wilderness of
lamps

Dimming the stars, and fireworks magical,
And gorgeous ladies, under splendid
domes,

Floating in dance, or warbling high in
air 125

The songs of spirits! Nor had Fancy fed
With less delight upon that other class

Of marvels, broad-day wonders perman-
nent:

The River proudly bridged; the dizzy top
And Whispering Gallery of St. Paul's;

the tombs 130

Of Westminster; the Giants of Guild-
hall;

Bedlam, and those carved maniacs at the
gates,

Perpetually recumbent; Statues—man,
And the horse under him—in gilded pomp

Adorning flowery gardens, 'mid vast
squares; 135

The Monument, and that Chamber of the
Tower

Where England's sovereigns sit in long
array,

Their steeds bestriding,—every mimic
shape

Cased in the gleaming mail the monarch
wore,

Whether for gorgeous tournament ad-
dressed, 140

Or life or death upon the battle-field.
Those bold imaginations in due time

Had vanished, leaving others in their
stead:

And now I looked upon the living scene;
Familiarly perused it; oftentimes, 145

In spite of strongest disappointment,
pleased

Through courteous self-submission, as a
tax

Paid to the object by prescriptive right.

Rise up, thou monstrous ant-hill on the
plain

Of a too busy world! Before me flow,
Thou endless stream of men and moving
things! 151

Thy every-day appearance, as it strikes—
With wonder heightened, or sublimed by
awe—

On strangers, of all ages; the quick dance
Of colours, lights, and forms; the deafen-
ing din; 155

The comers and the goers face to face,
Face after face; the string of dazzling
wares,

Shop after shop, with symbols, blazoned
names,

THE PRELUDE

[BOOK VII]

And all the tradesman's honours over-
head:

Here, fronts of houses, like a title-page,
With letters huge inscribed from top to toe;

Stationed above the door, like guardian
saints,

There, allegoric shapes, female or male,
Or physiognomies of real men.

Land-warriors, kings, or admirals of the
sea,

Boyle, Shakspeare, Newton, or the attrac-
tive head

Of some quack-doctor, famous in his
day.

Meanwhile the roar continues, till at
length,

Escaped as from an enemy, we turn
Abruptly into some sequestered nook,

Still as a sheltered place when winds blow
loud!

At leisure, thence, through tracts of thin
resort,

And sights and sounds that come at
intervals,

We take our way. A raree-show is here,
With children gathered round; another
street

Presents a company of dancing dogs,
Or dromedary, with an antic pair

Of monkeys on his back; a minstrel band
Of Savoyards; or, single and alone,

An English ballad-singer. Private courts,
Gloomy as coffins, and unsightly lanes

Thrilled by some female vendor's scream,
belike

The very shrillest of all London cries,
May then entangle our impatient steps;

Conducted through those labyrinths, un-
awares,

To privileged regions and inviolate,
Where from their airy lodges studious
lawyers

Look out on waters, walks, and gardens
green.

Thence back into the throng, until we
reach,

Following the tide that slackens by
degrees,

Some half-frequented scene, where wider
streets

Bring straggling breezes of suburban air.
Here files of ballads dangle from dead
walls;

Advertisements, of giant-size, from high
Press forward, in all colours, on the sight;

These, bold in conscious merit, lower
down;

That, fronted with a most imposing word,
Is, peradventure, one in masquerade.

As on the broadening causeway we ad-
vance,

Behold, turned upwards, a face hard and
strong

In lineaments, and red with over-toil.

'Tis one encountered here and every-
where;

A travelling cripple, by the trunk cut short,
And stumping on his arms. In sailor's
garb

Another lies at length, beside a range
Of well-formed characters, with chalk in-
scribed

Upon the smooth flat stones: the Nurse
is here,

The Bachelor, that loves to sun himself,
The military Idler, and the Dame,

That field-ward takes her walk with decent
steps.

Now homeward through the thickening
hubbub, where

See, among less distinguishable shapes,
The begging scavenger, with hat in hand;

The Italian, as he thrids his way with care,
Steady, far-seen, a frame of images

Upon his head; with basket at his breast
The Jew; the stately and slow-moving
Turk,

With freight of slippers piled beneath his
arm!

Enough;—the mighty concourse I sur-
veyed

With no unthinking mind, well pleased
to note

Among the crowd all specimens of man,
Through all the colours which the sun
bestows,

And every character of form and face:
The Swede, the Russian; from the genial
south,

The Frenchman and the Spaniard; from
remote

America, the Hunter-Indian; Moors,
Malays, Lascars, the Tartar, the Chinese,

And Negro Ladies in white muslin gowns.

At leisure, then, I viewed, from day to
day,

The spectacles within doors,—birds and
beasts

Of every nature, and strange plants con-
vened

From every clime; and, next, those sights
that ape

The absolute presence of reality,
Expressing, as in mirror, sea and land,

And what earth is, and what she has to
show.

I do not here allude to subtlest craft,
By means refined attaining purest ends,

But imitations, fondly made in plain
Confession of man's weakness and his
loves.

Whether the Painter, whose ambitious
skill

Submits to nothing less than taking in
A whole horizon's circuit, do with power,
Like that of angels or commissioned
spirits,

Fix us upon some lofty pinnacle,
Or in a ship on waters, with a world 245
Of life, and life-like mockery beneath,
Above, behind, far stretching and before;
Or more mechanic artist represent
By scale exact, in model, wood or clay,
From blended colours also borrowing
help, 250

Some miniature of famous spots or
things,—

St. Peter's Church; or, more aspiring aim,
In microscopical vision, Rome herself;
Or, haply, some choice rural haunt,—the
Falls

Of Tivoli; and, high upon that steep, 255
The Sibyl's mouldering Temple! every
tree,

Villa, or cottage, lurking among rocks
Throughout the landscape; tuft, stone,
scratch minute—

All that the traveller sees when he is
there. 259

Add to these exhibitions, mute and still,
Others of wider scope, where living men,
Music, and shifting pantomimic scenes,
Diversified the allurement. Need I fear
To mention by its name, as in degree,
Lowest of these and humblest in attempt,
Yet richly graced with honours of her own,
Half-rural Sadler's Wells? Though at that
time 267

Intolerant, as is the way of youth
Unless itself be pleased, here more than
once

Taking my seat, I saw (nor blush to add,
With ample recompense) giants and
dwarfs, 271

Clowns, conjurers, posture-masters, har-
lequins,

Amid the uproar of the rabblement,
Perform their feats. Nor was it mean
delight

To watch crude Nature work in untaught
minds; 275

To note the laws and progress of belief;
Though obstinate on this way, yet on that
How willingly we travel, and how far!

To have, for instance, brought upon the
scene 279

The champion, Jack the Giant-killer: Lo!
He dons his coat of darkness: on the stage
Walks, and achieves his wonders, from
the eye

Of living Mortal covert, 'as the moon
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.'

Delusion bold! and how can it be wrought?
The garb he wears is black as death, the
word 286

'Invisible' flames forth upon his chest.

Here, too, were 'forms and pressures
of the time,'

Rough, bold, as Grecian comedy displayed
When Art was young; dramas of living
men, 290

And recent things yet warm with life;
a sea-fight,

Shipwreck, or some domestic incident
Divulged by Truth and magnified by
Fame;

Such as the daring brotherhood of late
Se: forth, too serious theme for that light
place— 295

I mean, O distant Friend! a story drawn
From our own ground,—the Maid of
Buttermere,—

And how, unfaithful to a virtuous wife
Deserted and deceived, the Spoiler came
And wooed the artless daughter of the
hills, 300

And wedded her, in cruel mockery
Of love and marriage bonds. These words
to thee

Must needs bring back the moment when
we first,

Ere the broad world rang with the maiden's
name, 304

Beheld her serving at the cottage inn;
Both stricken, as she entered or with-
drew

With admiration of her modest mien
And carriage, marked by unexampled
grace.

We since that time not unfavourably
Have seen her,—her discretion have
observed, 310

Her just opinions, delicate reserve,
Her patience, and humility of mind

Unspoiled by commendation and the
excess

Of public notice—an offensive light
To a meek spirit suffering inwardly. 315

From this memorial tribute to my theme
I was returning, when, with sundry forms
Commingled—shapes which met me in
the way

That we must tread—thy image rose
again,

Maiden of Buttermere! She lives in peace
Upon the spot where she was born and
reared; 321

Without contamination doth she live
In quietness, without anxiety:

Beside the mountain-chapel, sleeps in
earth

Her new-born infant, fearless as a lamb
That, thither driven from some unshel-
tered place, 326

Rests underneath the little rock-like pile
When storms are raging. Happy are they
both—

Mother and child!—These feelings, in
themselves

Trite, do yet scarcely seem so when I
 think
 On those ingenuous moments of our youth
 Ere we have learnt by use to slight the crimes
 And sorrows of the world. Those simple days
 Are now my theme; and, foremost of the scenes,
 Which yet survive in memory, appears
 One, at whose centre sate a lovely Boy,
 A sportive infant, who, for six months' space,
 Not more, had been of age to do as I.
 Articulate prattle—Child as he
 As ever clung around a mother's side.
 Or father fondly gazed upon
 There, too, conspicuous for his white
 And large dark eyes, beside him stood
 The mother; but, upon her face diffused,
 False tints too well accorded with the glare
 From play-house lustres thrown without reserve
 On every object near. The Boy had been
 The pride and pleasure of all lookers-on
 In whatsoever place, but seemed in this
 A sort of alien scattered from the clouds.
 Of lusty vigour, more than infantine
 He was in limb, in cheek a summer rose
 Just three parts blown—a cottage-child—
 if e'er,
 By cottage-door on breezy mountain-side,
 Or in some sheltering vale, was seen a babe
 By Nature's gift so favoured. Upon a board
 Decked with refreshments had this child been placed,
 His little stage in the vast theatre,
 And there he sate surrounded with a throng
 Of chance spectators, fly dissolute men
 And shameless women, flattered and caressed;
 Ate, drank, and with the frugal classes
 played.
 While oaths and laughter and licentious speech
 Were rife about him as the songs of birds
 Contending after showers. The mother now
 Is fading out of memory, but I see
 The lovely Boy as I beheld him then
 Among the wretched and the falsely gay,
 Like one of those who walked with hair unsinged
 Amid the fiery furnace. Charms and spells

Muttered on black and spiteful instigation
 Have stopped, as some believe, the kindest growths.
 Ah, with how different spirit might a prayer
 Have been preferred, that this fair creature, checked
 By special privilege of Nature's love,
 Should in his childhood be detained forever!
 But with its universal freight the tide
 Hath rolled along, and this bright innocent,
 Mary! may now have lived till he could look
 With envy on thy nameless babe that sleeps,
 Beside the mountain-chapel, undisturbed.

Four rapid years had scarcely then been told
 Since, travelling southward from our pastoral hills,
 I heard, and for the first time in my life,
 The voice of woman utter blasphemy—
 Saw woman as she is, to open shame
 Abandoned, and the pride of public vice;
 I shuddered, for a barrier seemed at once
 Thrown in, that from humanity divorced
 Humanity, splitting the race of man
 In twain, yet leaving the same outward form.
 Distress of mind ensued upon the sight,
 And ardent meditation. Later years
 Brought to such spectacle a milder sadness,
 Feelings of pure commiseration, grief
 For the individual and the overthrow
 Of her soul's beauty; farther I was then,
 But seldom led, or wished to go; in truth
 The sorrow of the passion stopped me there.

But let me now, less moved, in order take
 Our argument. Enough is said to show
 How casual incidents of real life,
 Observed where pastime only had been sought,
 Outweighed, or put to flight, the set events
 And measured passions of the stage,
 albe it
 Siddons trod in the fulness of her power.
 Yet was the theatre my dear delight;
 The very gilding, lamps and painted scrolls,
 And all the mean upholstery of the place,
 Wanted not animation, when the tide
 Of pleasure ebbed but to return as fast
 With the ever-shifting figures of the scene,

Solemn or gay: whether some beauteous
 dame
 Advanced in radiance through a deep
 recess
 Of thick entangled forest, like the moon
 Opening the clouds; or sovereign king,
 announced 416
 With flourishing trumpet, came in full-
 blown state
 Of the world's greatness, winding round
 with train
 Of courtiers, banners, and a length of
 guards;
 Or captive led in abject weeds, and
 jingling 420
 His slender manacles; or romping girl
 Bounced, leapt, and pawed the air; or
 mumbling sire,
 A scare-crow pattern of old age dressed up
 In all the tatters of infirmity
 All loosely put together, hobbled in, 425
 Stumping upon a cane with which he
 smites,
 From time to time, the solid boards, and
 makes them
 Prate somewhat loudly of the whereabouts
 Of one so overloaded with his years.
 But what of this! the laugh, the grin,
 grimace, 430
 The antics striving to outstrip each other,
 Were all received, the least of them not
 lost,
 With an unmeasured welcome. Through
 the night,
 Between the show, and many-headed
 mass 434
 Of the spectators, and each several nook
 Filled with its fray or brawl, how eagerly
 And with what flashes, as it were, the
 mind
 Turned this way—that way! sportive and
 alert
 And watchful, as a kitten when at play,
 While winds are eddying round her,
 among straws 440
 And rustling leaves. Enchanting age and
 sweet!
 Romantic almost, looked at through a
 space,
 How small, of intervening years! For
 then,
 Though surely no mean progress had been
 made
 In meditations holy and sublime, 445
 Yet something of a girlish child-like glow
 Of novelty survived for scenes like these;
 Enjoyment haply handed down from
 times
 When at a country-playhouse, some rude
 barn
 Tricked out for that proud use, if I per-
 chance 450
 Caught, on a summer evening through a
 chink

In the old wall, an unexpected glimpse
 Of daylight, the bare thought of where I
 was
 Gladdened me more than if I had been
 led
 Into a dazzling cavern of romance, 455
 Crowded with Genii busy among works
 Not to be looked at by the common sun.
 The matter that detains us now may
 seem,
 To many, neither dignified enough
 Nor anxious, yet will not be scorned by
 them, 460
 Looking inward, have observed the
 Thawing of the perishable hours of life
 Each other, and the curious props
 Bid the world of memory and
 Existence is sustained. More lofty
 Such as at least do wear a prouder face, 465
 Solicit our regard; but when I think
 Of these, I feel the imaginative power
 Languish within me; even then it slept,
 When, pressed by tragic sufferings, the
 heart 470
 Was more than full; amid my sobs and
 tears
 It slept, even in the pregnant season of
 youth.
 For though I was most passionately moved
 And yielded to all changes of the scene
 With an obsequious promptness, yet the
 storm 475
 Passed not beyond the suburbs of the
 mind;
 Save when realities of act and mien,
 The incarnation of the spirits that move
 In harmony amid the Poet's world, 479
 Rose to ideal grandeur, or, called forth
 By power of contrast, made me recognise,
 As at a glance, the things which I had
 shaped,
 And yet not ~~seen~~, had seen and scarcely
 seen,
 When, ~~hazy~~, ~~closed~~ the mighty Shak-
 spea ~~stage~~,
 I ~~mused~~ ~~and~~ thought, and felt, in soli-
 485
 Pass we from entertainments, that are
 such
 Professedly, to others titled higher,
 Yet, in the estimate of youth at least,
 More near akin to those than names
 imply,—
 I mean the brawls of lawyers in their
 courts 490
 Before the ermined judge, or that great
 stage
 Where senators, tongue-favoured men,
 perform,

THE PRÉLUDE

[BOOK VI]

Admired and, envied. Oh! the beating heart,

When one among the prime of these rose up,—

One, of whose name from childhood we had heard

Familiarly, a household term, like those, The Bedfords, Glosters, Salisburys, of old

Whom the fifth Harry talks of. Silence! hush!

This is no trifter, no short-flighted wit, No stammerer of a minute, painfully

Delivered. No! the Orator hath yoked The Hours, like young Aurora, to his car:

Thrice welcome Presence! how can patience e'er

Grow weary of attending on a track That kindles with such glory! All are

charmed, Astonished; like a hero in romance, He winds away his never-ending horn;

Words follow words, sense seems to follow sense:

What memory and what logic! till the strain

Transcendent, superhuman as it seemed, Grows tedious even in a young man's ear.

Genius of Burke! forgive the pen seduced

By specious wonders, and too slow to tell Of what the ingenuous, what bewildered

men, Beginning to mistrust their boastful guides,

And wise men, willing to grow wiser, caught,

Rapt auditors! from thy most eloquent tongue—

Now mute, for ever mute in the cold grave. I see him,—old, but vigorous in age,—

Stand like an oak whose stag-horn branches start

Out of its leafy brow, the more to awe The younger brethren of the grove. But

some— While he forewarns, denounces, launches forth,

Against all systems built on abstract rights, Keen ridicule; the majesty proclaims

Of Institutes and Laws, hallowed by time; Declares the vital power of social ties

Endeared by Custom; and with high disdain,

Exploding upstart Theory, insists Upon the allegiance to which men are

born— Some—say at once a froward multitude—

Murmur (for truth is hated, where not loved)

As the winds fret within the Æolian cave, Galled by their monarch's chain. The

times were big

With ominous change, which, night by night, provoked

Keen struggles, and black clouds of passion raised;

But memorable moments intervened, When Wisdom, like the Goddess from

Jove's brain, Broke forth in armour of resplendent

words, Startling the Synod. Could a youth, and one

In ancient story versed, whose breast had heaved

Under the weight of classic eloquence, Sit, see, and hear, unthankful, uninspired?

Nor did the Pulpit's oratory fail

To achieve its higher triumph. Not unfelt

Were its admonishments, nor lightly heard

The awful truths delivered thence by tongues

Endowed with various power to search the soul;

Yet ostentation, domineering, oft Poured forth harangues, how sadly out of

place!— There have I seen a comely bachelor,

Fresh from a toilette of two hours, ascend His rostrum, with seraphic glance look up,

And, in a tone elaborately low Beginning, lead his voice through many

a maze A minuet course; and, winding up his

mouth, From time to time, into an orifice

Most delicate, a lurking eyelet, small, And only not invisible, again

Open it out, diffusing thence a smile Of rapt irradiation, exquisite.

Meanwhile the Evangelists, Isaiah, Job, Moses, and he who penned, the other day,

The Death of Abel, Shakspeare, and the Bard

Whose genius spangled o'er a gloomy theme

With fancies thick as his inspiring stars, And Ossian (doubt not—'tis the naked

truth) Summoned from streamy Morven—each

and all Would, in their turns, lend ornaments

and flowers To entwine the crook of eloquence that

helped This pretty Shepherd, pride of all the

plains, To rule and guide his captivated flock.

I glance but at a few conspicuous marks,

Leaving a thousand others, that, in hall, Court, theatre, conventicle, or shop,

In public room or private, park or street,

Each fondly reared on his own pedestal,
Looked out for admiration. Folly, vice,
Extravagance in gesture, mien, and dress,
And all the strife of singularity, 580
Lies to the ear, and lies to every sense—
Of these, and of the living shapes they

wear,
There is no end. Such candidates for
regard,
Although well pleased to be where they
were found,

I did not hunt after, nor greatly prize, 585
Nor made unto myself a secret boast
Of reading them with quick and curious
eye;

But, as a common produce, things that are
To-day, to-morrow will be, took of them
Such willing note, as, on some errand
bound 590

That asks not speed, a traveller might
bestow

On sea-shells that bestrew the sandy
beach,

Or daisies swarming through the fields of
June.

But foolishness and madness in parade,
Though most at home in this their dear
domain, 595

Are scattered everywhere, no rarities,
Even to the rudest novice of the Schools.
Me, rather, it employed, to note, and
keep

In memory, those individual sights
Of courage, or integrity, or truth, 600
Or tenderness, which there, set off by foil,
Appeared more touching. One will I
select;

A Father—for he bore that sacred name—
Him saw I, sitting in an open square,
Upon a corner-stone of that low wall, 605
Wherein were fixed the iron pales that
fenced

A spacious grass-plot; there, in silence,
sate

This One Man, with a sickly babe out-
stretched

Upon his knee, whom he had thither
brought

For sunshine, and to breathe the fresher
air. 610

Of those who passed, and me who looked
at him,

He took no heed; but in his brawny arms
(The Artificer was to the elbow bare,
And from his work this moment had been
stolen)

He held the child, and, bending over it,
As if he were afraid both of the sun 616
And of the air, which he had come to seek,
Eyed the poor babe with love unutterable.

As the black storm upon the mountain-
top
Sets off the sunbeam in the valley, so 620

That huge fermenting mass of human-
kind

Serves as a solemn background, or relief,
To single forms and objects, whence they
draw,

For feeling and contemplative regard, 624
More than inherent liveliness and power.
How oft, amid those overflowing streets,
Have I gone forward with the crowd, and
said

Unto myself, 'The face of every one
That passes by me is a mystery!'
Thus have I looked, nor ceased to look,
oppressed 630

By thoughts of what and whither, when
and how,

Until the shapes before my eyes became
A second-sight procession, such as glides
Over still mountains, or appears in
dreams;

And once, far-travelled in such mood,
beyond 635

The reach of common indication, lost
Amid the moving pageant, I was smitten
Abruptly, with the view (a sight not rare)
Of a blind Beggar, who, with upright
face,

Stood, propped against a wall, upon his
chest 640

Wearing a written paper, to explain
His story, whence he came, and who he
was.

Caught by the spectacle my mind turned
round

As with the might of waters; an apt type
This label seemed of the utmost we can
know, 645

Both of ourselves and of the universe;
And, on the shape of that unmoving man,
His steadfast face and sightless eyes, I
gazed,

As if admonished from another world.

Though reared upon the base of out-
ward things, 650

Structures like these the excited spirit
mainly

Builds for herself; scenes different there
are,

Full-formed, that take, with small internal
help,

Possession of the faculties,—the peace
That comes with night; the deep solemn-
nity 655

Of nature's intermediate hours of rest,
When the great tide of human life stands
still;

The business of the day to come, unborn,
Of that gone by, locked up, as in the
grave;

The blended calmness of the heavens and
earth, 660

Moonlight and stars, and empty streets,
and sounds

THE PRELUDE

[BOOK VII

Unfrequent as in deserts; at late hours
Of winter evenings, when unwholesome
rains

Are falling hard, with people yet astir,
The feeble salutation from the voice 665
Of some unhappy woman, now and then
Heard as we pass, when no one looks
about,

Nothing is listened to. But these, I fear,
Are falsely catalogued; things that are,
are not,

As the mind answers to them, or the
heart 670

Is prompt, or slow, to feel. What say
you, then,

To times, when half the city shall break
out

Full of one passion, vengeance, rage, or
fear?

To executions, to a street on fire,
Mobs, riots, or rejoicings? From these
sights 675

Take one,—that ancient festival, the Fair,
Holden where martyrs suffered in past
time,

And named of St. Bartholomew; there,
see

A work completed to our hands, that lays,
If any spectacle on earth can do, 680
The whole creative powers of man
asleep!—

For once, the Muse's help will we implore,
And she shall lodge us, wafted on her
wings,

Above the press and danger of the crowd,
Upon some showman's platform. What
a shock 685

For eyes and ears! what anarchy and
din,

Barbarian and infernal,—a phantasma,
Monstrous in colour, motion, shape, sight,
sound!

Below, the open space, through every
nook

Of the wide area, twinkles, is alive 690
With heads; the midway region, and
above,

Is thronged with staring pictures and huge
scrolls,

Dumb proclamations of the Prodigies;
With chattering monkeys, dangling from
their poles,

And children whirling in their round-
abouts; 695

With those that stretch the neck and
strain the eyes,

And crack the voice in rivalry, the
crowd

Inviting; with buffoons against buffoons
Grimacing, writhing, screaming,—him
who grinds

The hurdy-gurdy, at the fiddle weaves,
Rattles the salt-box thumps the kettle-
drum, 701

And him who at the trumpet puffs his
cheeks,

The silver-collared Negro with his timbrel,
Equestrians, tumblers, women, girls, and
boys,

Blue-breeched, pink-vested, with high-
towering plumes.— 705

All moveables of wonder, from all parts,
Are here—Albinos, painted Indians,
Dwarfs,

The Horse of knowledge, and the learned
Pig,

The Stone-eater, the man that swallows
fire,

Giants, Ventriloquists, the Invisible Girl,
The Bust that speaks and moves its
goggling eyes, 711

The Wax-work, Clock-work, all the mar-
vellous craft

Of modern Merlins, Wild Beasts, Puppet-
shows,

All out-o'-the-way, far-fetched, perverted
things,

All freaks of nature, all Promethean
thoughts 715

Of man, his dulness, madness, and their
feats

All jumbled up together, to compose
A Parliament of Monsters. Tents and
Booths

Meanwhile, as if the whole were one vast
mill,

Are vomiting, receiving on all sides, 720
Men, Women, three-years' Children,
Babes in arms.

Oh, blank confusion! true epitome
Of what the mighty City is herself,

To thousands upon thousands of her sons,
Living amid the same perpetual whirl 725

Of trivial objects, melted and reduced
To one identity, by differences

That have no law, no meaning, and no
end—

Oppression, under which even highest
minds

Must labour, whence the strongest are
not free. 730

But though the picture weary out the eye,
By nature an unmanageable sight,

It is not wholly so to him who looks
In steadiness, who hath among least
things 734

An under-sense of greatest; sees the parts
As parts, but with a feeling of the whole.

This, of all acquisitions, first awaits
On sundry and most widely different
modes

Of education, nor with least delight
On that through which I passed. Atten-
tion springs, 740

And comprehensiveness and memory flow,
From early converse with the works of
God

Among all regions; chiefly where appear
Most obviously simplicity and power.
Think, how the everlasting streams and
woods, 745
Stretched and still stretching far and wide,
exalt
The roving Indian, on his desert sands:
What grandeur not unfelt, what pregnant
show
Of beauty, meets the sun-burnt Arab's
eye:
And, as the sea propels, from zone to
zone, 750
Its currents; magnifies its shoals of life
Beyond all compass; spreads, and sends
aloft
Armies of clouds,—even so, its powers
and aspects
Shape for mankind, by principles as fixed,
The views and aspirations of the soul 755

To majesty. Like virtue have the forms
Perennial of the ancient hills; nor less
The changeful language of their coun-
tenances
Quickens the slumbering mind, and aids
the thoughts,
However multitudinous, to move 760
With order and relation. This, if still,
As hitherto, in freedom I may speak,
Not violating any just restraint,
As may be hoped, of real modesty,—
This did I feel, in London's vast do-
main. 765
The Spirit of Nature was upon me there;
The soul of Beauty and enduring Life
Vouchsafed her inspiration, and diffused,
Through meagre lines and colours, and
the press
Of self-destroying, transitory things, 770
Composure, and ennobling Harmony.

BOOK EIGHTH

RETROSPECT.—LOVE OF NATURE LEADING TO LOVE
OF MAN

WHAT sounds are those, Helvellyn, that
are heard
Up to thy summit, through the depth of
air
Ascending, as if distance had the power
To make the sounds more audible? What
crowd
Covers, or sprinkles o'er, yon village
green? 5
Crowd seems it, solitary hill! to thee,
Though but a little family of men,
Shepherds and tillers of the ground—be-
times
Assembled with their children and their
wives,
And here and there a stranger inter-
spersed. 10
They hold a rustic fair—a festival,
Such as, on this side now, and now on
that,
Repeated through his tributary vales,
Helvellyn, in the silence of his rest,
Sees annually, if clouds towards either
ocean 15
Blown from their favourite resting-place,
or mists
Dissolved, have left him an unshrouded
head.
Delightful day it is for all who dwell
In this secluded glen, and eagerly
They give it welcome. Long ere heat of
noon, 20
From byre or field the kine were brought;
the sheep
Are penned in cotes; the chaffering is
begun.

The heifer lows, uneasy at the voice
Of a new master; bleat the flocks aloud.
Booths are there none; a stall or two is
here; 25
A lame man or a blind, the one to beg,
The other to make music; hither, too,
From far, with basket, slung upon her
arm,
Of hawker's wares—books, pictures,
combs, and pins—
Some aged woman finds her way again, 30
Year after year, a punctual visitant!
There also stands a speech-maker by rote,
Pulling the strings of his boxed raree-
show;
And in the lapse of many years may come
Prouder itinerant, mountebank, or he 35
Whose wonders in a covered wain lie
hid.
But one there is, the loveliest of them all,
Some sweet lass of the valley, looking out
For gains, and who that sees her would
not buy?
Fruits of her father's orchard are her
wares, 40
And with the ruddy produce she walks
round
Among the crowd, half pleased with, half
ashamed
Of her new office, blushing restlessly.
The children now are rich, for the old to-
day
Are generous as the young; and, if con-
tent 45
With looking on, some ancient wedded
pair

Sit in the shade together, while they gaze,
'A cheerful smile unbends the wrinkled
brow,

The days departed start again to life,
And all the scenes of childhood reappear,
Faint, but more tranquil, like the chang-
ing sun 51

To him who slept at noon and wakes at
eve."

Thus gaiety and cheerfulness prevail,
Spreading from young to old, from old to
young,

And no one seems to want his share.—
Immense 55

Is the recess, the circumambient world
Magnificent, by which they are embraced:
They move about upon the soft green
turf:

How little they, they and their doings,
seem,

And all that they can further or obstruct!
Through utter weakness pitifully dear, 61
As tender infants are: and yet how great!
For all things serve them; them the
morning light

Loves, as it glistens on the silent rocks;
And them the silent rocks, which now
from high 65

Look down upon them; the reposing
clouds;

The wild brooks prattling from invisible
haunts;

And old Helvellyn, conscious of the stir
Which animates this day their calm
abode. 69

With deep devotion, Nature, did I feel,
In that enormous City's turbulent world
Of men and things, what benefit I owed
To thee, and those domains of rural peace,
Where to the sense of beauty first my
heart

Was opened; tract more exquisitely fair
Than that famed paradise of ten thousand
trees, 76

Or Gehol's matchless gardens, for delight
Of the Tartarian dynasty composed
(Beyond that mighty wall, not fabulous,
China's stupendous mound) by patient
toil 80

Of myriads and boon nature's lavish help;
There, in a clime from widest empire
chosen,

Fulfilling (could enchantment have done
more?)

A sumptuous dream of flowery lawns, with
domes

Of pleasure sprinkled over, shady dells 85
For eastern monasteries, sunny mounts
With temples crested, bridges, gondolas,
Rocks, dens, and groves of foliage taught
to melt

Into each other their obsequious hues,

¹ From the *Malvern Hills* of Joseph Cottle.

Vanished and vanishing in subtle chase,
Too fine to be pursued; or standing forth
In no discordant opposition, strong
And gorgeous as the colours side by side
Bedded among rich plumes of tropic
birds;

And mountains over all, embracing all; 95
And all the landscape, endlessly enriched
With waters running, falling, or asleep.

But lovelier far than this, the paradise
Where I was reared; in Nature's primi-
tive gifts

Favoured no less, and more to every
sense 100

Delicious, seeing that the sun and sky,
The elements, and seasons as they change,
Do find a worthy fellow-labourer there—
Man free, man working for himself, with
choice

Of time, and place, and object; by his
wants, 105

His comforts, native occupations, cares,
Cheerfully led to individual ends
Or social, and still followed by a train
Unwooded, unthought-of even—simpli-
city,

And beauty, and inevitable grace. 110

Yea, when a glimpse of those imperial
bowers

Would to a child be transport over-great,
When but a half-hour's roam through such
a place

Would leave behind a dance of images,
That shall break in upon his sleep for
weeks; 115

Even then the common haunts of the
green earth,

And ordinary interests of man,
Which they embosom, all without regard
As both may seem, are fastening on the
heart

Insensibly, each with the other's help. 120
For me, when my affections first were led
From kindred, friends, and playmates, to

partake
Love for the human creature's absolute
self,

That noticeable kindness of heart
Sprang out of fountains, there abounding
most, 125

Where sovereign Nature dictated the
tasks

And occupations which her beauty
adorned,

And Shepherds were the men that pleased
me first;

Not such as Saturn ruled 'mid Latian
wilds,

With arts and laws so tempered, that
their lives 130

Left, even to us toiling in this late day,
A bright tradition of the golden age;

Not such as, 'mid Arcadian fastnesses

Sequestered, handed down among themselves
 Felicity, in Grecian song renowned; 135
 Nor such as—when an adverse fate had driven,
 From house and home, the courtly band
 whose fortunes
 Entered, with Shakspeare's genius, the
 wild woods
 Of Arden—amid sunshine or in shade
 Culled the best fruits of Time's uncounted
 hours, 140
 Ere Phoebe sighed for the false Gany-
 mede;
 Or there where Perdita and Florizel
 Together danced, Queen of the feast, and
 King;
 Nor such as Spenser fabled. True it is,
 That I had heard (what he perhaps had
 seen) 145
 Of maids at sunrise bringing in from far
 Their May-bush, and along the street in
 flocks
 Parading with a song of taunting rhymes,
 Aimed at the laggards slumbering within
 doors;
 Had also heard, from those who yet re-
 membered, 150
 Tales of the May-pole dance, and wreaths
 that decked
 Porch, door-way, or kirk-pillar; and of
 youths,
 Each with his maid, before the sun was
 up,
 By annual custom, issuing forth in troops,
 To drink the waters of some sainted well,
 And hang it round with garlands. Love
 survives; 156
 But, for such purpose, flowers no longer
 grow:
 The times, too sage, perhaps too proud,
 have dropped
 These lighter graces; and the rural ways
 And manners which my childhood looked
 upon 160
 Were the unluxuriant produce of a life
 Intent on little but substantial needs,
 Yet rich in beauty, beauty that was felt.
 But images of danger and distress,
 Man suffering among awful Powers and
 Forms; 165
 Of this I heard, and saw enough to make
 Imagination restless; nor was free
 Myself from frequent perils; nor were
 tales
 Wanting,—the tragedies of former times,
 Hazards and strange escapes, of which
 the rocks 170
 Immutable, and everflowing streams,
 Where'er I roamed, were speaking monu-
 ments.

Smooth life had flock and shepherd in
 old time,

Long springs and tepid winters, on the
 banks
 Of delicate Galesus; and no less 175
 Those scattered along Adria's myrtle
 shores:
 Smooth life had herdsman, and his snow-
 white herd
 To triumphs and to sacrificial rites
 Devoted, on the inviolable stream
 Of rich Clitumnus; and the goat-herd
 lived 180
 As calmly, underneath the pleasant brows
 Of cool Lucretilis, where the pipe was
 heard
 Of Pan, Invisible God, thrilling the rocks
 With tutelary music, from all harm
 The fold protecting. I myself, mature
 In manhood then, have seen a pastoral
 tract 186
 Like one of these, where Fancy might
 run wild,
 Though under skies less generous, less
 serene:
 There, for her own delight had Nature
 framed
 A pleasure-ground, diffused a fair ex-
 panse 190
 Of level pasture, islanded with groves
 And banked with woody risings; but the
 Plain
 Endless, here opening widely out, and
 there
 Shut up in lesser lakes or beds of lawn
 And intricate recesses, creek or bay 195
 Sheltered within a shelter, where at large
 The shepherd strays, a rolling hut his
 home.
 Thither he comes with spring-time, there
 abides
 All summer, and at sunrise ye may hear
 His flageolet to liquid notes of love 200
 Attuned, or sprightly fife resounding far.
 Nook is there none, nor tract of that vast
 space
 Where passage opens, but the same shall
 have
 In turn its visitant, telling there his hours
 In unlaborious pleasure, with no task
 More toilsome than to carve a beechen
 bowl 206
 For spring or fountain, which the traveller
 finds,
 When through the region he pursues at
 will
 His devious course. A glimpse of such
 sweet life
 I saw when, from the melancholy walls
 Of Goslar, once imperial, I renewed 211
 My daily walk along that wide cham-
 paign,
 That, reaching to her gates, spreads east
 and west,
 And northwards, from beneath the moun-
 tainous verge

THE PRELUDE

[BOOK VIII]

Of the Hercynian forest. Yet, hail to you ²¹⁵
 Moors, mountains, headlands, and ye hollow vales,
 Ye long deep channels for the Atlantic's voice,
 Powers of my native region! Ye that seize
 The heart with firmer grasp! Your snows and streams ²¹⁹
 Ungovernable, and your terrifying winds,
 That howl so dismally for him who treads
 Companionless your awful solitudes!
 There, 'tis the shepherd's task the winter long
 To wait upon the storms: of their approach
 Sagacious, into sheltering coves he drives
 His flock, and thither from the homestead bears ²²⁶
 A toilsome burden up the craggy ways,
 And deals it out, their regular nourishment
 Strewn on the frozen snow. And when the spring
 Looks out, and all the pastures dance with lambs, ²³⁰
 And when the flock, with warmer weather, climbs
 Higher and higher, him his office leads
 To watch their goings, whatsoever track the wanderers choose. For this he quits his home
 At day-spring, and no sooner doth the sun ²³⁵
 Begin to strike him with a fire-like heat,
 Than he lies down upon some shining rock,
 And breakfasts with his dog. When they have stolen,
 As is their wont, a pittance from strict time,
 For rest not needed or exchange of love,
 Then from his couch he starts; and now his feet ²⁴¹
 Crush out a livelier fragrance from the flowers
 Of lowly thyme, by Nature's skill enwrought
 In the wild turf: the lingering dews of morn
 Smoke round him, as from hill to hill he hies, ²⁴⁵
 His staff protending like a hunter's spear,
 Or by its aid leaping from crag to crag,
 And o'er the brawling beds of unbridged streams.
 Philosophy, methinks, at Fancy's call,
 Might deign to follow him through what he does ²⁵⁰
 Or sees in his day's march; himself he feels,
 In those vast regions where his service lies,

A freeman, wedded to his life of hope
 And hazard, and hard labour inter-
 changed
 With that majestic indolence so dear ²⁵⁵
 To native man. A rambling schoolboy, thus
 I felt his presence in his own domain,
 As of a lord and master, or a power,
 Or genius, under Nature, under God,
 Presiding; and severest solitude ²⁶⁰
 Had more commanding looks when he was there.
 When up the lonely brooks on rainy days
 Angling I went, or trod the trackless hills
 By mists bewildered, suddenly mine eyes
 Have glanced upon him distant a few steps, ²⁶⁵
 In size a giant, stalking through thick fog,
 His sheep like Greenland bears; or, as he stepped
 Beyond the boundary line of some hill-shadow,
 His form hath flashed upon me, glorified
 By the deep radiance of the setting sun:
 Or him have I descried in distant sky, ²⁷¹
 A solitary object and sublime,
 Above all height! like an aerial cross
 Stationed alone upon a spiry rock
 Of the Chartreuse, for worship. Thus was man ²⁷⁵
 Ennobled outwardly before my sight,
 And thus my heart was early introduced
 To an unconscious love and reverence
 Of human nature; hence the human form
 To me became an index of delight, ²⁸⁰
 Of grace and honour, power and worthiness.
 Meanwhile this creature—spiritual almost
 As those of books, but more exalted far;
 Far more of an imaginative form
 Than the gay Corin of the groves, who lives ²⁸⁵
 For his own fancies, or to dance by the hour,
 In coronal, with Phyllis in the midst—
 Was, for the purposes of kind, a man
 With the most common; husband, father; learned,
 Could teach, admonish; suffered with the rest ²⁹⁰
 From vice and folly, wretchedness and fear;
 Of this I little saw, cared less for it,
 But something must have felt.
 Call ye these appearances—
 Which I beheld of shepherds in my youth,
 This sanctity of Nature given to man—
 A shadow, a delusion, ye who pore ²⁹⁶
 On the dead letter, miss the spirit of things;
 Whose truth is not a motion or a shape
 Instinct with vital functions, but a block

Or waxen image which yourselves have
made, ³⁰⁰
And ye adore! But blessed be the God
Of Nature and of Man that this was so;
That men before my inexperienced eyes
Did first present themselves thus purified,
Removed, and to a distance that was fit;
And so we all of us in some degree ³⁰⁶
Are led to knowledge, wheresoever led,
And howsoever; were it otherwise,
And we found evil fast as we find good
In our first years, or think that it is found,
How could the innocent heart bear up
and live! ³¹⁷
But doubly fortunate my lot; not here
Alone, that something of a better life
Perhaps was round me than it is the
privilege
Of most to move in, but that first I looked
At man through objects that were great
or fair; ³¹⁶
First communed with him by their help.
And thus
Was founded a sure safeguard and defence
Against the weight of meanness, selfish
cares,
Coarse manners, vulgar passions, that
beat in ³²⁰
On all sides from the ordinary world
In which we traffic. Starting from this
point
I had my face turned toward the truth,
began
With an advantage furnished by that
kind
Of prepossession, without which the soul
Receives no knowledge that can bring
forth good. ³²⁶
No genuine insight ever comes to her.
From the restraint of over-watchful eyes
Preserved, I moved about, year after
year,
Happy, and now most thankful that my
walk ³³⁰
Was guarded from too early intercourse
With the deformities of crowded life,
And those ensuing laughters and con-
tempt,
Self-pleasing, which, if we would wish to
think
With a due reverence on earth's rightful
lord, ³³⁵
Here placed to be the inheritor of heaven,
Will not permit us; but pursue the mind,
That to devotion willingly would rise,
Into the temple and the temple's heart.

Yet deem not, Friend! that human
kind with me ³⁴⁰
Thus early took a place pre-eminent;
Nature herself was, at this unripe time,
But secondary to my own pursuits
And animal activities, and all

Their trivial pleasures; and when these
had drooped ³⁴⁵
And gradually expired, and Nature,
prized
For her own sake, became my joy, even
then—
And upwards through late youth, until
not less
Than two-and-twenty summers had been
told—
Was Man in my affections and regards
Subordinate to her, her visible forms ³⁵¹
And viewless agencies: a passion, she,
A rapture often, and immediate love
Ever at hand; he, only a delight
Occasional, an accidental grace, ³⁵⁵
His hour being not yet come. Far less
had then
The inferior creatures, beast or bird,
attuned
My spirit to that gentleness of love
(Though they had long been carefully
observed), ³⁵⁹
Won from me those minute obeisances
Of tenderness, which I may number
now
With my first blessings. Nevertheless,
on these
The light of beauty did not fall in vain,
Or grandeur circumfuse them to no end.

But when that first poetic faculty ³⁶⁵
Of plain Imagination and severe,
No longer a mute influence of the soul,
Ventured, at some rash Muse's earnest
call,
To try her strength among harmonious
words;
And to book-notions and the rules of art
Did knowingly conform itself; there
came ³⁷¹
Among the simple shapes of human life
A wilfulness of fancy and conceit:
And Nature and her objects beautified
These fictions, as in some sort, in their
turn, ³⁷⁵
They furnished her. From touch of this
new power
Nothing was safe: the elder-tree that
grew
Beside the well-known charnel-house had
then
A dismal look; the yew-tree had its
ghost, ³⁷⁹
That took his station there for ornament:
The dignities of plain occurrence then
Were tasteless, and truth's golden mean,
a point
Where no sufficient pleasure could be
found.
Then, if a widow, staggering with the
blow
Of her distress, was known to have turned
her steps ³⁸⁵

THE PRELUDE

[BOOK VIII]

To the cold grave in which her husband
 slept,
 One night, or haply more than one,
 through pain
 Or half-insensate impotence of mind,
 The fact was caught at greedily, and there
 She must be visitant the whole year
 through,
 Wetting the turf with never-ending tears.

Through quaint obliquities I might
 pursue
 These cravings; when the foxglove, one
 by one,
 Upwards through every stage of the tall
 stem,
 Had shed beside the public way its bells,
 And stood of all dismantled, save the last
 Left at the tapering ladder's top, that
 seemed
 To bend as doth a slender blade of grass
 Tipped with a rain-drop, Fancy loved to
 seat,
 Beneath the plant despoiled, but crested
 still
 With this last relic, soon itself to fall,
 Some vagrant mother, whose arch little
 ones,
 All unconcerned by her dejected plight,
 Laughed as with rival eagerness their
 hands
 Gathered the purple cups that round
 them lay,
 Strewing the turf's green slope.

A diamond light
 (Whene'er the summer sun, declining,
 smote
 A smooth rock wet with constant springs)
 was seen
 Sparkling from out a copse-clad bank
 that rose
 Fronting our cottage. Oft beside the
 hearth
 Seated, with open door, often and long
 Upon this restless lustre have I gazed,
 That made my fancy restless as itself.
 'Twas now for me a burnished silver
 shield
 Suspended over a knight's tomb, who lay
 Inglorious, buried in the dusky wood:
 An entrance now into some magic cave
 Or palace built by fairies of the rock;
 Nor could I have been bribed to disen-
 chant

The spectacle, by visiting the spot.
 Thus wilful Fancy, in no hurtful mood,
 Engrafted far-fetched shapes on feelings
 bred

By pure Imagination: busy Power
 She was, and with her ready pupil turned
 Instinctively to human passions, then
 Least understood. Yet, 'mid the fervent
 swarm
 Of these vagaries, with an eye so rich

As mine was through the bounty of a
 grand
 And lovely region, I had forms distinct
 To steady me: each airy thought re-
 volved
 Round a substantial centre, which at
 once
 Incited it to motion, and controlled.
 I did not pine like one in cities bred,
 As was thy melancholy lot, dear Friend!
 Great Spirit as thou art, in endless
 dreams
 Of sickliness, disjoining, joining, things
 Without the light of knowledge. Where
 the harm,
 If, when the woodman languished with
 disease
 Induced by sleeping nightly on the
 ground
 Within his sod-built cabin, Indian-wise,
 I called the pangs of disappointed love,
 And all the sad etcetera of the wrong,
 To help him to his grave? Meanwhile the
 man,
 If not already from the woods retired
 To die at home, was haply as I knew,
 Withering by slow degrees, 'mid gentle
 airs,
 Birds, running streams, and hills so
 beautiful
 On golden evenings, while the charcoal
 pile
 Breathed up its smoke, an image of his
 ghost
 Or spirit that full soon must take her
 flight.
 Nor shall we not be tending towards that
 point
 Of sound humanity to which our Tale
 Leads, though by sinuous ways, if here I
 show
 How Fancy, in a season when she wove
 Those slender cords, to guide the uncon-
 scious Boy
 For the Man's sake, could feed at Nature's
 call
 Some pensive musings which might well
 beseem
 Maturer years.
 A grove there is whose boughs
 Stretch from the western marge of Thur-
 ston-mere,
 With length of shade so thick, that whoso
 glides
 Along the line of low-roofed water, moves
 As in a cloister. Once—while, in that
 shade
 Loitering, I watched the golden beams of
 light
 Flung from the setting sun, as they
 reposed
 In silent beauty on the naked ridge
 Of a high eastern hill—thus flowed my
 thoughts

In a pure stream of words fresh from the heart:

Dear native Regions, wheresoe'er shall close

By mortal course, there will I think on you;

Dying, will cast on you a backward look;
Even as this setting sun (albeit the Vale
Is no where touched by one memorial gleam)

Doth with the fond remains of his last power

Still linger, and a farewell lustre sheds
On the dear mountain-tops where first he rose.

Enough of humble arguments; recall,
My Song! those high emotions which thy voice

Has heretofore made known; that bursting forth

Of sympathy, inspiring and inspired,
When everywhere a vital pulse was felt,
And all the several frames of things, like stars,

Through every magnitude distinguishable,
Shone mutually indebted, or half lost

Each in the other's blaze, a galaxy
Of life and glory. In the midst stood Man,

Outwardly, inwardly contemplated,
As, of all visible natures, crown, though born

Of dust, and kindred to the worm; a Being,

Both in perception and discernment, first
In every capability of rapture,

Through the divine effect of power and love;

As, more than anything we know, instinct
With godhead, and, by reason and by will,

Acknowledging dependency sublime.

Ere long, the lonely mountains left,
I moved,

Begin, from day to day, with temporal shapes

Of vice and folly thrust upon my view,
Objects of sport, and ridicule, and scorn,

Manners and characters discriminate,
And little bustling passions that eclipse,

As well they might, the impersonated thought,

The idea, or abstraction of the kind.

An Idler among academic bowers,
Such was my new condition, as at large

Has been set forth; yet here the vulgar light

Of present, actual, superficial life,
Gleaming through colouring of other times,

Old usages and local privilege,
Was welcome, softened, if not solemnised.

This notwithstanding, being brought more near

To vice and guilt, forerunning wretchedness,

I trembled,—thought, at times, of human life

With an indefinite terror and dismay,
Such as the storms and angry elements
Had bred in me; but gloomier far, a dim
Analogy to uproar and misrule,
Disquiet, danger, and obscurity.

It might be told (but wherefore speak of things

Common to all?) that, seeing, I was led
Graveley to ponder—judging between good

And evil, not as for the mind's delight
But for her guidance—one who was to act,

As sometimes to the best of feeble means
I did, by human sympathy impelled;

And, through dislike and most offensive pain,

Was to the truth conducted; of this faith
Never forsaken, that, by acting well,

And understanding, I should learn to love
The end of life, and everything we know.

Grave Teacher, stern Preceptress! for at times

Thou canst put on an aspect most severe;
London, to thee I willingly return.

Erewhile my verse played idly with the flowers

Enwrought upon thy mantle; satisfied
With that amusement, and a simple look

Of child-like inquisition now and then
Cast upwards on thy countenance, to detect

Some inner meanings which might harbour there.

But how could I in mood so light indulge,
Keeping such fresh remembrance of the day,

When, having thriddled the long labyrinth
Of the suburban villages, I first

Entered thy vast dominion? On the roof
Of an itinerant vehicle I sat,

With vulgar men about me, trivial forms
Of houses, pavement, streets, of men and things,—

Mean shapes on every side: but, at the instant,

When to myself it fairly might be said,
The threshold now is overpast, (how strange

That aught external to the living mind
Should have such mighty sway! yet so it was),

A weight of ages did at once descend
Upon my heart; no thought embodied,

Distinct remembrances, but weight and power,—

Power growing under weight: alas! I feel

THE PRELUDE

[BOOK VII]

That I am trifling: 'twas a moment's
pause,—
All that took place within me came and
went

As in a moment; yet with Time it dwells,
And grateful memory, as a thing divine.

The curious traveller, who, from open
day, 560
Hath passed with torches into some huge
cave,

The Grotto of Antiparos, or the Den
In old time haunted by that Danish Witch,
Yordas; he looks around and sees the
vault

Widening on all sides; sees, or thinks he
sees, 565

Erelong, the massy roof above his head,
That instantly unsettles and recedes,—
Substance and shadow, light and dark-
ness, all

Commingled, making up a canopy
Of shapes and forms and tendencies to
shape 570

That shift and vanish, change and inter-
change

Like spectres,—ferment silent and sub-
lime!

That after a short space works less and
less,

Till, every effort, every motion gone,
The scene before him stands in perfect
view 575

Exposed, and lifeless as a written book!—
But let him pause awhile, and look again,
And a new quickening shall succeed, at
first

Beginning timidly, then creeping fast,
Till the whole cave, so late a senseless
mass, 580

Busies the eye with images and forms
Boldly assembled,—here is shadowed
forth

From the projections, wrinkles, cavities,
A variegated landscape,—there the shape
Of some gigantic warrior clad in mail, 585
The ghostly semblance of a hooded monk,
Veiled nun, or pilgrim resting on his
staff:

Strange congregation! yet not slow to
meet

Eyes that perceive through minds that
can inspire.

Even in such sort had I at first been
moved, 590

Nor otherwise continued to be moved,
As I explored the vast metropolis,
Fount of my country's destiny and the
world's;

That great emporium, chronicle at once
And burial-place of passions, and their
home 595
Imperial, their chief living residence.

With strong sensations teeming as it
did
Of past and present, such a place must
needs

Have pleased me, seeking knowledge at
that time

Far less than craving power; yet know-
ledge came, 600

Sought or unsought, and influxes of
power

Came, of themselves, or at her call de-
rived

In fits of kindest apprehensiveness,
From all sides, when whate'er was in
itself

Capacious found, or seemed to find, in
me 605

A correspondent amplitude of mind;
Such is the strength and glory of our
youth!

The human nature unto which I felt
That I belonged, and revered with
love,

Was not a punctual presence, but a spirit
Diffused through time and space, with
aid derived 611

Of evidence from monuments, erect,
Prostrate, or leaning towards their com-
mon rest

In earth, the widely scattered wreck sub-
lime

Of vanished nations, or more clearly
drawn 615

From books and what they picture and
record.

'Tis true, the history of our native land,
With those of Greece compared and
popular Rome,

And in our high-wrought modern narra-
tives

Strip of their harmonising soul, the life
Of manners and familiar incidents, 621
Had never much delighted me. And
less

Than other intellects had mine been used
To lean upon extrinsic circumstance

Of record or tradition; but a sense 625
Of what in the Great City had been done
And suffered, and was doing, suffering,
still,

Weighed with me, could support the test
of thought;

And, in despite of all that had gone by,
Or was departing never to return. 630

There I conversed with majesty and power
Like independent natures. Hence the
place

Was thronged with impregnations like
the Wilds

In which my early feelings had been
nursed—

Bare hills and valleys, full of caverns,
rocks, 635

And audible seclusions, dashing lakes,
Echoes and waterfalls, and pointed crags
That into music touch the passing
wind.

Here then my young imagination found
No uncongenial element; could here 640
Among new objects serve or give com-
mand,

Even as the heart's occasions might re-
quire,
To forward reason's else too scrupulous
march.

The effect was, still more elevated views
Of human nature. Neither vice nor guilt,
Debasement undergone by body or mind,
Nor all the misery forced upon my sight,
Misery not lightly passed, but sometimes
scanned 648

Most feelingly, could overthrow my trust
In what we *may* become; induce belief
That I was ignorant, had been falsely
taught, 651

A solitary, who with vain conceits
Had been inspired, and walked about in
dreams.

From those sad scenes when meditation
turned,

Lo! everything that was indeed divine
Retained its purity inviolate, 656
Nay brighter shone, by this portentous
gloom

Set off; such opposition as aroused
The mind of Adam, yet in Paradise
Though fallen from bliss, when in the
East he saw 660

Darkness ere day's mid course, and morn-
ing light

More orient in the western cloud, that
drew
O'er the blue firmament a radiant white,
Descending slow with something heavenly
fraught. 664

Add also, that among the multitudes
Of that huge city, oftentimes was seen
Affectingly set forth, more than else-
where

Is possible, the unity of man,
One spirit over ignorance and vice
Predominant in good and evil hearts;
One sense for moral judgments, as one
eye 671

For the sun's light. The soul when
smitten thus

By a sublime *idea*, whence so'er
Vouchsafed for union or communion,
feeds

On the pure bliss, and takes her rest with
God. 675

Thus from a very early age, O Friend!
My thoughts by slow gradations had
been drawn

To human-kind, and to the good and ill
Of human life: Nature had led me on;
And oft amid the 'busy hum' I seemed
To travel independent of her help, 681

As if I had forgotten her; but no,
The world of human-kind outweighed not
hers

In my habitual thoughts; the scale of love,
Though filling daily, still was light, com-
pared 685

With that in which *her* mighty objects
lay.

BOOK NINTH

RESIDENCE IN FRANCE

EVEN as a river,—partly (it might seem)
Yielding to old remembrances, and
swayed

In part by fear to shape a way direct,
That would engulf him soon in the
ravenous sea—

Turns, and will measure back his course,
far back, 5

Seeking the very regions which he crossed
In his first outset; so have we, my Friend!
Turned and returned with intricate delay.

Or as a traveller, who has gained the brow
Of some aerial Down, while there he halts
For breathing-time, is tempted to review
The region left behind him; and, if aught
Deserving notice have escaped regard,

Or been regarded with too careless eye,
Strives, from that height, with one and
yet one more 15

Last look, to make the best amends he
may:

So have we lingered. Now we start
afresh

With courage, and new hope risen on our
toil.

Fair greeting, to this shapeless eagerness,
Whene'er it comes! needful in work so
long, 20

Thrice needful to the argument which
now

Awaits us! Oh, how much unlike the
past!

Free as a colt at pasture on the hill,
I ranged at large, through London's wide
domain,

Month after month. Obscurely did I
live, 25

THE PRELUDE

[BOOK IX

Not seeking frequent intercourse with
men,

By literature, or elegance, or rank,
Distinguished. Scarcely was a year thus
spent

Ere I forsook the crowded solitude, 29
With less regret for its luxurious pomp,
And all the nicely-guarded shows of art,
Than for the humble book-stalls in the
streets,
Exposed to eye and hand where'er I
turned.

France lured me forth; the realm that
I had crossed
So lately, journeying toward the snow-
clad Alps. 35
But now, relinquishing the scrip and staff,
And all enjoyment which the summer sun
Sheds round the steps of those who meet
the day

With motion constant as his own, I went
Prepared to sojourn in a pleasant town,
Washed by the current of the stately
Loire. 41

Through Paris lay my readiest course,
and there
Sojourning a few days, I visited
In haste, each spot of old or recent fame,
The latter chiefly; from the field of Mars
Down to the suburbs of St. Antony, 46
And from Mont Martre southward to
the Dome

Of Geneviève. In both her clamorous
Halls,
The National Synod and the Jacobins,
I saw the Revolutionary Power 50
Toss like a ship at anchor, rocked by
storms;

The Arcades I traversed, in the Palace
huge
Of Orleans; coasted round and round the
line

Of Tavern, Brothel, Gaming-house, and
Shop,
Great rendezvous of worst and best, the
walk 55

Of all who had a purpose, or had not;
I stared and listened, with a stranger's
ears,

To Hawkers and Haranguers, hubbub
wild!

And hissing Factionists with ardent eyes,
In knots, or pairs, or single. Not a look
Hope takes, or Doubt or Fear is forced
to wear, 61

But seemed there present; and I scanned
them all,

Watched every gesture uncontrollable,
Of anger, and vexation, and despite,
All side by side, and struggling face to
face, 65

With gaiety and dissolute idleness.

Where silent zephyrs sported with the
dust

Of the Bastille, I sate in the open sun,
And from the rubbish gathered up a stone,
And pocketed the relic, in the guise 70
Of an enthusiast; yet, in honest truth,
I looked for something that I could not
find,

Affecting more emotion than I felt;
For 'tis most certain, that these various
sights,

However potent their first shock, with me
Appeared to recompense the traveller's
pains 76

Less than the painted Magdalene of Le
Brun,

A beauty exquisitely wrought, with hair
Dishevelled, gleaming eyes, and rueful
cheek

Pale and bedropped with everflowing
tears. 80

But hence to my more permanent abode
I hasten; there, by novelties in speech,
Domestic manners, customs, gestures,
looks,

And all the attire of ordinary life,
Attention was engrossed; and, thus
amused, 85

I stood, 'mid those concussions, uncon-
cerned,

Tranquil almost, and careless as a flower
Glossed in a greenhouse, or a parlour
shrub

That spreads its leaves in unmolested
peace,

While every bush and tree, the country
through, 90

Is shaking to the roots: indifference this
Which may seem strange: but I was un-
prepared

With needful knowledge, had abruptly
passed

Into a theatre, whose stage was filled
And busy with an action far advanced.

Like others, I had skimmed, and some-
times read 96

With care, the master-pamphlets of the
day;

Nor wanted such half-insight as grew
wild

Upon that meagre soil, helped out by
talk 99

And public news; but having never seen
A chronicle that might suffice to show

Whence the main organs of the public
power

Had sprung, their transmigrations, when
and how

Accomplished, giving thus unto events
A form and body; all things were to me

Loose and disjointed, and the affections
left 106

Without a vital interest. At that time,

Moreover, the first storm was overblown,
 And the strong hand of outward violence
 Locked up in quiet. For myself, I fear
 Now in connection with so great a theme
 To speak (as I must be compelled to do)
 Of one so unimportant; night by night
 Did I frequent the formal haunts of men,
 Whom, in the city, privilege of birth 115
 Sequestered from the rest, societies
 Polished in arts, and in punctilio versed;
 Whence, and from deeper causes, all dis-
 course
 Of good and evil of the time was shunned
 With scrupulous care; but these restric-
 tions soon 120
 Proved tedious, and I gradually with-
 drew
 Into a noisier world, and thus ere long
 Became a patriot; and my heart was all
 Given to the people, and my love was
 theirs.

A band of military Officers, 125
 Then stationed in the city, were the chief
 Of my associates: some of these wore
 swords
 That had been seasoned in the wars, and
 all
 Were men well-born; the chivalry of
 France.

In age and temper differing, they had yet
 One spirit ruling in each heart; alike 131
 (Save only one, hereafter to be named)
 Were bent upon undoing what was done:
 This was their rest and only hope; there-
 with

No fear had they of bad becoming worse,
 For worst to them was come; nor would
 have stirred, 136

Or deemed it worth a moment's thought
 to stir,

In anything, save only as the act
 Looked thitherward. One, reckoning by
 years,

Was in the prime of manhood, and ere-
 while 140

He had sate lord in many tender hearts;
 Though heedless of such honours now,
 and changed:

His temper was quite mastered by the
 times,

And they had blighted him, had eaten
 away

The beauty of his person, doing wrong
 Alike to body and to mind: his port, 146
 Which once had been erect and open, now
 Was stooping and contracted, and a face,
 Endowed by Nature with her fairest gifts
 Of symmetry and light and bloom, ex-
 pressed, 150

As much as any that was ever seen,
 A ravage out of season, made by thoughts
 Unhealthy and vexatious. With the hour,
 That from the press of Paris duly brought

Its freight of public news, the fever
 came, 155

A punctual visitant, to shake this man,
 Disarmed his voice and fanned his yellow
 cheek

Into a thousand colours; while he read,
 Or mused, his sword was haunted by his
 touch

Continually, like an uneasy place 160
 In his own body. 'Twas in truth an hour
 Of universal ferment; mildest men

Were agitated; and commotions, strife
 Of passions and opinions, filled the walls

Of peaceful houses with unquiet sounds.
 The soil of common life, was, at that
 time, 166

Too hot to tread upon. Oft said I then,
 And not then only, 'What a mockery
 this

Of history, the past and that to come!
 Now do I feel how all men are deceived,
 Reading of nations and their works, in
 faith, 171

Faith given to vanity and emptiness;
 Oh! laughter for the page that would
 reflect

To future times the face of what now is!
 The land all swarmed with passion, like
 a plain 175

Devoured by locusts,—Carra, Gorsas,—
 add ~~—Gorsas~~ 177

A hundred other names, forgotten now,
 Nor to be heard of more; yet, they were
 powers,

Like earthquakes, shocks repeated day
 by day,

And felt through every nook of town and
 field. 180

Such was the state of things. Mean-
 while the chief

Of my associates stood prepared for flight
 To augment the band of emigrants in
 arms

Upon the borders of the Rhine, and
 leagued

With foreign foes mustered for instant
 war. 185

This was their undisguised intent, and
 they

Were waiting with the whole of their
 desires

The moment to depart.

An Englishman,
 Born in a land whose very name appeared
 To license some unruliness of mind; 190

A stranger, with youth's further privilege,
 And the indulgence that a half-learn't
 speech

Wins from the courteous; I, who had
 been else

Shunned and not tolerated, freely lived
 With these defenders of the Crown, and
 talked, 195

THE PRELUDE

[BOOK IX

And heard their notions; nor did they
~~disdain~~
 The wish to bring me over to their cause.

But though untaught by thinking or by
 books
 To reason well of polity or law,
 And nice distinctions, then on every
 tongue, 200
 Of natural rights and civil; and to acts
 Of nations and their passing interests,
 (If with unworldly ends and aims compared)

Almost indifferent, even the historian's
 tale 204

Prizing but little otherwise than I prized
 Tales of the poets, as it made the heart
 Beat high, and filled the fancy with fair
 forms,
 Old heroes and their sufferings and their
 deeds;

Yet in the regal sceptre, and the pomp
 Of orders and degrees, I nothing found
 Then, or had ever, even in crudest youth,
 That dazzled me, but rather what I
 mourned 212

And ill could brook, beholding that the
 best
 Ruled not, and feeling that they ought to
 rule.

For, born in a poor district, and which
 yet 215

Retaineth more of ancient homeliness,
 Than any other nook of English ground,
 It was my fortune scarcely to have seen,
 Through the whole tenour of my school-
 day time,

The face of one, who, whether boy or
 man, 220
 Was vested with attention or respect
 Through claims of wealth or blood; nor
 was it least

Of many benefits, in later years
 Derived from academic institutes
 And rules, that they held something up
 to view 225

Of a Republic, where all stood thus far
 Upon equal ground; that we were brothers
 all

In honour, as in one community,
 Scholars and gentlemen; where, further-
 more,
 Distinction open lay to all that came, 230
 And wealth and titles were in less esteem
 Than talents, worth, and prosperous in-
 dustry.

Add unto this, subservience from the first
 To presences of God's mysterious power
 Made manifest in Nature's sovereignty,
 And fellowship with venerable books, 236
 To sanction the proud workings of the
 soul,

And mountain liberty. It could not be

But that one tutored thus should look
 with awe ~~receptivity~~

Upon the faculties of man, receive 240
 Gladly the highest promises, and hail,
 As best, the government of equal rights
 And individual worth. And hence, O
 Friend!

If at the first great outbreak I rejoiced
 Less than might well befit my youth, the
 cause 245

In part lay here, that unto me the events
 Seemed nothing out of nature's certain
 course,

A gift that was come rather late than
 soon.

No wonder, then, if advocates like these,
 Inflamed by passion, blind with pre-
 judice, 250

And stung with injury, at this ripper day,
 Were impotent to make my hopes put on
 The shape of theirs, my understanding
 bend

In honour to their honour: zeal, which
 yet 254

Had slumbered, now in opposition burst
 Forth like a Polar summer: every word
 They uttered was a dart, by counter-
 winds

Blown back upon themselves; their reason
 seemed

Confusion-stricken by a higher power
 Than human understanding, their dis-
 course 260

Maimed, spiritless: and, in their weakness
 strong, ~~imperfect~~
 I triumphed.

Meantime, day by day, the roads
 Were crowded with the bravest youth of
 France,

And all the promptest of her spirits,
 linked 264

In gallant soldiery, and ~~posting on~~
 To meet the war upon her frontier bounds.

Yet at this very moment do tears start
 Into mine eyes: I do not say I weep—
 I wept not then,—but tears have dimmed
 my sight, ~~separation~~

In memory of the farewells of that time,
 Domestic severings, female fortitude 271

At dearest separation, patriot love
 And self-devotion, and terrestrial hope,

Encouraged with a martyr's confidence;
 Even files of strangers merely seen but
 once, ~~company~~ 275

And for a moment, men from far with
 sound

Of music, martial tunes, and banners
 spread,

Entering the city, here and there a face,
 Or person singled out among the rest,

Yet still a stranger and beloved as such;
 Even by these passing spectacles my
 heart 281

Was oftentimes uplifted, and they seemed

From least beginnings; how, together

By ^{made} ~~new~~ opinions, scattered tribes have
One body, spreading wide as clouds in
heaven.

To aspirations then of our own minds 380
Did we appeal; and, finally, beheld
A living confirmation of the whole
Before us, in a people from the depth
Of shameful imbecility uprisen,
Fresh as the morning star. Elate we

looked 385
Upon their virtues; saw, in rudest men,
Self-sacrifice the firmest; generous love,
And continence of mind, and sense of
right,
Uppermost in the midst of fiercest strife.

Oh, sweet it is, in academic groves, 390
Or such retirement, Friend! as we have
known

In the green dales beside our Rotha's
stream,
Greta, or Derwent, or some nameless rill,
To ruminate, with interchange of talk,
On rational liberty, and hope in man, 395
Justice and peace. But far more sweet
such toil—

Toil, say I, for it leads to thoughts ab-
struse

If nature then be standing on the brink
Of some great trial, and we hear the voice
Of one devoted,—one whom circumstance
Hath called upon to embody his deep
sense 401

In action, give it outwardly a shape,
And that of benediction, to the world.
Then doubt is not, and truth is more than
truth,—

A hope it is, and a desire; a creed 405
Of zeal, by an authority Divine
Sanctioned, of danger, difficulty, or death.
Such conversation, under Attic shades,
Did Dion hold with Plato; ripened thus
For a deliverer's glorious task,—and such
He, on that ministry already bound, 411
Held with Eudemus and Timonides,
Surrounded by adventurers in arms,
When those two vessels with their daring
freight,

For the Sicilian Tyrant's overthrow, 415
Sailed from Zacynthus,—philosophic war,
Led by Philosophers. With harder fate,
Though like ambition, such was he, O
Friend!

Of whom I speak. So BEAUPUY (let the
name

Stand near the worthiest of Antiquity)
Fashioned his life; and many a long dis-
course, 421

With like persuasion honoured, we main-
tained:

He, on his part, accoutred for the worst,

He perished fighting, in supreme com-
mand.

Upon the borders of the unhappy Loire,¹
For liberty, against deluded men, 426
His fellow country-men; and yet most
blessed

In this, that he the fate of later times
Lived not to see, nor what we now behold,
Who have as ardent hearts as he had
then.² 430

Along that very Loire, with festal mirth
Resounding at all hours, and innocent yet
Of civil slaughter, was our frequent walk;
Or in wide forests of continuous shade,
Lofty and over-arched, with open space
Beneath the trees, clear footing many
a mile— 436

A solemn region. Oft amid those haunts,
From earnest dialogues I slipped in
thought,

And let remembrance steal to other times,
When o'er those interwoven roots, moss-
clad, 440

And smooth as marble or a waveless sea,
Some Hermit, from his cell forth-strayed,
might pace

In sylvan meditation undisturbed;
As on the pavement of a Gothic church
Walks a lone Monk, when service hath
expired, 445

In peace and silence. But if e'er was
heard,—

Heard, though unseen,—a devious tra-
veller,

Retiring or approaching from afar
With speed and echoes loud of trampling
hoofs

From the hard floor reverberated, then
It was Angelica thundering through the
woods 451

Upon her palfrey, or that gentle maid
Erminia, fugitive as fair as she.

Sometimes methought I saw a pair of
knights

Joust underneath the trees, that as in
storm 455

Rocked high above their heads; anon,
the din

Of boisterous merriment, and music's
roar,

In sudden proclamation, burst from haunt
Of Satyrs in some viewless glade, with
dance

Rejoicing o'er a female in the midst, 460
A mortal beauty, their unhappy thrall.

The width of those huge forests, unto me
A novel scene, did often in this way
Master my fancy while I wandered on

¹ An error. Beaupuy died at Emmendingen, shot
while in command of a division of the Army of the
Rhine and the Moselle.—ED.

² For the story of W's. relations with Beaupuy,
see *Le Général Michel Beaupuy*, by MM. Georges
Bussièrre and Emile Legouis: Chap. II.—ED.

With that revered companion. And some-
times— 465

When to a convent in a meadow green,
By a brook-side, we came, a roofless pile,
And not by reverential touch of Time
Dismantled, but by violence abrupt—
In spite of those heart-bracing colloquies,
In spite of real fervour, and of that 471
Less genuine and wrought up within my-
self—

I could not but bewail a wrong so harsh,
And for the Matin-bell to sound no more
Grieved, and the twilight taper, and the
cross 475

High on the topmost pinnacle, a sign
(How welcome to the weary traveller's
eyes!)

Of hospitality and peaceful rest.
And when the partner of those varied
walks

Pointed upon occasion to the site 480
Of Romorentin, home of ancient kings,
To the imperial edifice of Blois,
Or to that rural castle, name now slipped
From my remembrance, where a lady
lodged.

By the first Francis wooed, and bound to
him 485

In chains of mutual passion, from the
tower,

As a tradition of the country tells,
Practised to commune with her royal
knight

By cressets and love-beacons, intercourse
'Twixt her high-seated residence and his
Far off at Chambord on the plain beneath;
Even here, though less than with the peace-
ful house

Religious, 'mid those frequent monuments
Of Kings, their vices and their better
deeds, *powerful and true feelings*

Imagination, potent to inflame 495
At times with virtuous wrath and noble
scorn, *and more subtle*

Did also often mitigate the force
Of civic prejudice, the bigotry,

So call it, of a youthful patriot's mind;
And on these spots with many gleams I
looked 500

Of chivalrous delight. Yet not the less,
Hatred of absolute rule, where will of one
Is law for all, and of that barren pride
In them who, by immunities unjust,

Between the sovereign and the people
stand, *King* 505

His helper and not theirs, laid stronger
hold

Daily upon me, mixed with pity too
And love; for where hope is, there love
will be *and true friend*

For the abject multitude. And when we
chanced

One day to meet a hunger-bitten girl, 510
Who crept along fitting her languid gait

Unto a heifer's motion, by a cord
Tied to her arm, and picking thus from
the lane

Its sustenance, while the girl with pallid
hands 514

Was busy knitting in a heartless mood
Of solitude, and at the sight my friend
In agitation said, 'Tis against *that*
That we are fighting, I with him believed
That a benignant spirit was abroad

Which might not be withstood, that
poverty 520

Abject as this would in a little time
Be found no more, that we should see the
earth

Unthwarted in her wish to recompense
The meek, the lowly, patient child of
toil,

All institutes for ever blotted out 525
That legalised exclusion, empty pomp

Abolished, sensual state and cruel power,
Whether by edict of the one or few;

And finally, as sum and crown of all,
Should see the people having a strong
hand 530

In framing their own laws; whence better
days

To all mankind. But, these things set
apart,

Was not this single confidence enough
To animate the mind that ever turned
A thought to human welfare,—that,
henceforth 535

Captivity by mandate without law
Should cease; and open accusation lead

To sentence in the hearing of the world,
And open punishment, if not the air

Be free to breathe in, and the heart of
man 540

Dread nothing? From this height I shall
not stoop

To humbler matter that detained us oft
In thought or conversation, public acts,

And public persons, and emotions
wrought

Within the breast, as ever-varying winds
Of record or report swept over us; 546

But I might here, instead, repeat a tale,¹
Told by my Patriot friend, of sad events,

That prove to what low depth had struck
the roots,

How widely spread the boughs, of that
old tree 550

Which, as a deadly mischief, and a foul
And black dishonour, France was weary
of.

O, happy time of youthful lovers, (thus
The story might begin,) oh, balmy time,
In which a love-knot on a lady's brow,
Is fairer than the fairest star in Heaven!
So might—and with that prelude *did*
begin 557

¹ Vaudracour and Julia, p. 96.—Ed.

The ^{given} and; and, in faithful verse, was
The doleful sequel.

But our little bark
On a strong river boldly hath been
launched; ⁵⁶⁰
And from the driving current should we
turn
To loiter wilfully within a creek,
Howe'er attractive, Fellow voyager!
Wouldst thou not chide? Yet deem not
my pains lost:

For Vaudracour and Julia (so were
named ⁵⁶⁵

The ill-fated pair) in that plain tale will
draw

Tears from the hearts of others, when
their own

Shall beat no more. Thou, also, there
may'st read,

At leisure, where the enamoured youth was
driven, ⁵⁶⁹

By public power abased, to fatal crime,
Nature's rebellion against monstrous law;

How, between heart and heart, oppres-
sion thrust

Her mandates, severing whom true love
had joined,

Harassing both; until he sank and pressed
The couch his fate had made for him:

supine, ⁵⁷⁵
Save when the stings of viperous re-
morse,

Trying their strength, enforced him to
start up,

Aghast and prayerless. Into a deep wood
He fled, to shun the haunts of human

kind;

There dwelt, weakened in spirit more
and more; ⁵⁸⁰

Nor could the voice of Freedom, which
through France

Full speedily resounded, public hope,
Or personal memory of his own worst

wrongs,
Rouse him; but, hidden in those gloomy

shades, ⁵⁸⁴
His days he wasted,—an imbecile mind.

BOOK TENTH

RESIDENCE IN FRANCE—(CONTINUED)

It was a beautiful and silent day
That overspread the countenance of earth,
Then fading with unusual quietness,—

A day as beautiful as e'er was given
To soothe regret, though deepening what

it soothed, ⁵
When by the gliding Loire I paused, and
cast

Upon his rich domains, vineyard and
tilth,

Green meadow-ground, and many-
coloured woods,

Again, and yet again, a farewell look;
Then from the quiet of that scene passed

on, ¹⁰
Bound to the fierce Metropolis. From
his throne

The King had fallen, and that invading
host—

Presumptuous cloud, on whose black
front was written

The tender mercies of the dismal wind
That bore it—on the plains of Liberty ¹⁵

Had burst innocuous. Say in bolder
words,

They—who had come elate as eastern
hunters

Banded beneath the Great Mogul, when
he

Erewhile went forth from Agra or Lahore,
Rajahs and Omrahs in his train, intent ²⁰

To drive their prey enclosed within a ring
Wide as a province, but, the signal given,

Before the point of the life-threatening
spear

Narrowing itself by moments—they, rash
men,

Had seen the anticipated quarry turned
Into avengers, from whose wrath they

fled ²⁶
In terror. Disappointment and dismay
Remained for all whose fancies had run

wild
With evil expectations; confidence ²⁹

And perfect triumph for the better cause.

The State, as if to stamp the final seal
On her security, and to the world

Show what she was, a high and fearless
soul,

Exulting in defiance, or heart-stung ³⁴
By sharp resentment, or belike to taunt

With spiteful gratitude the baffled League,
That had stirred up her slackening facul-
ties

To a new transition, when the King was
crushed,

Spared not the empty throne, and in
proud haste

Assumed the body and venerable name
Of a Republic. Lamentable crimes, ⁴¹

'Tis true, had gone before this hour, dire
work

Of massacre, in which the senseless sword
Was prayed to as a judge; but these were
past

Earth free from them for ever, as was
thought,— 45
Ephemeral monsters, to be seen but once!
Things that could only show themselves
and die.

Cheered with this hope, to Paris I
returned,
And ranged, with ardour heretofore un-
felt,

The spacious city, and in progress passed
The prison where the unhappy Monarch
lay, 51

Associate with his children and his wife
In bondage; and the palace, lately
stormed

With roar of cannon by a furious host. 54
I crossed the square (an empty area then!)
Of the Carrousel, where so late had lain
The dead, upon the dying heaped, and
gazed

On this and other spots, as doth a man
Upon a volume whose contents he knows
Are memorable, but from him locked
up, 60

Being written in a tongue he cannot read,
So that he questions the mute leaves with
pain, 4

And half upbraids their silence. But
that night

I felt most deeply in what world I was,
What ground I trod on, and what air I
breathed. 65

High was my room and lonely, near the
roof

Of a large mansion or hotel, a lodge
That would have pleased me in more
quiet times;

Nor was it wholly without pleasure then.
With unextinguished taper I kept watch,
Reading at intervals; the fear gone by 71

Pressed on me almost like a fear to come.
I thought of those September massacres,
Divided from me by one little month,
Saw them and touched: the rest was con-
jured up 75

From tragic fictions or true history,
Remembrances and dim admonishments.
The horse is taught his manage, and no
star

Of wildest course but treads back his own
steps;

For the spent hurricane the air provides
As fierce a successor; the tide retreats 81
But to return out of its hiding-place

In the great deep; all things have second
birth;

The earthquake is not satisfied at once;
And in this way I wrought upon myself,
Until I seemed to hear a voice that cried,
To the whole city, 'sleep no more.' The
trance

Fled with the voice to which it had given
birth;

But vainly comments of a calmer mind
Promised soft peace and sweet forgetful-
ness. 90

The place, all hushed and silent as it was,
Appeared unfit for the repose of night,
Defenceless as a wood where tigers roam.

With early morning towards the Palace-
walk

Of Orleans eagerly I turned; as yet 95
The streets were still; not so those long
Arcades;

There, 'mid a peal of ill-matched sounds
and cries,

That greeted me: on entering, I could
hear

Shrill voices from the hawkers in the
throng,

Bawling, 'Denunciation of the Crimes 100
Of Maximilian Robespierre;' the hand,
Prompt as the voice, held forth a printed
speech,

The same that had been recently pro-
nounced,

When Robespierre, not ignorant for what
mark

Some words of indirect reproof had
been 105

Intended, rose in hardihood, and dared
The man who had an ill surmise of him

To bring his charge in openness; whereat,
When a dead pause ensued, and no one
stirred,

In silence of all present, from his seat 110
Louvvet walked single through the avenue,
And took his station in the Tribune, say-
ing,

'I, Robespierre, accuse thee!' Well is
known

The inglorious issue of that charge, and
how

He, who had launched the startling thun-
derbolt, 115

The one bold man, whose voice the attack
had sounded,

Was left without a follower to discharge
His perilous duty, and retire lamenting

That Heaven's best aid is wasted upon
men

Who to themselves are false.

But these are things 120
Of which I speak, only as they were storm
Or sunshine to my individual mind,

No further. Let me then relate that
now—

In some sort seeing with my proper eyes
That Liberty, and Life, and Death would
soon 125

To the remotest corners of the land
Lie in the arbitrement of those who ruled

The capital City; what was struggled for,
And by what combatants victory must be
won;

The indecision on their part whose aim

Severe, best, and the straightforward
 path of those 131
 Who in attack or in defence were strong
 Through their impiety—my inmost soul
 Was agitated; yea, I could almost
 Have prayed that throughout earth upon
 all men, 135
 By patient exercise of reason made
 Worthy of liberty, all spirits filled
 With zeal expanding in Truth's holy light,
 The gift of tongues might fall, and power
 arrive
 From the four quarters of the winds to
 do 140
 For France, what without help she could
 not do,
 A work of honour; think not that to this
 I added, work of safety: from all doubt
 Or trepidation for the end of things
 Far was I, far as angels are from guilt. 145

Yet did I grieve, nor only grieved, but
 thought
 Of opposition and of remedies:
 An insignificant stranger and obscure,
 And one, moreover, little graced with
 power
 Of eloquence even in my native speech,
 And all unfit for tumult or intrigue, 151
 Yet would I at this time with willing
 heart
 Have undertaken for a cause so great
 Service however dangerous. I revolved,
 How much the destiny of Man had
 still 155
 Hung upon single persons; that there
 was,
 Transcendent to all local patrimony,
 One nature, as there is one sun in heaven;
 That objects, even as they are great,
 thereby
 Do come within the reach of humble
 eyes; 160
 That Man is only weak through his mis-
 trust
 And want of hope where evidence divine
 Proclaims to him that hope should be
 most sure;
 Nor did the inexperience of my youth
 Preclude conviction, that a spirit strong
 In hope, and trained to noble aspirations,
 A spirit thoroughly faithful to itself, 167
 Is for Society's unreasoning herd
 A domineering instinct, serves at once
 For way and guide, a fluent receptacle 170
 That gathers up each petty straggling rill
 And vein of water, glad to be rolled on
 In safe obedience; that a mind, whose
 rest
 Is where it ought to be, in self-restraint,
 In circumspection and simplicity, 175
 Falls rarely in entire discomfiture
 Below its aim, or meets with, from with-
 out,

A treachery that foils it or defeats;
 And, lastly, if the means on human will
 Frail human will, dependent should be-
 tray 180
 Him who too boldly trusted them, I felt
 That 'mid the loud distractions of the
 world
 A sovereign voice subsists within the soul,
 Arbiter undisturbed of right and wrong,
 Of life and death, in majesty severe 185
 Enjoining, as may best promote the aims
 Of truth and justice, utter sacrifice,
 From whatsoever region of our cares
 Or our infirm affections Nature pleads,
 Earnest and blind, against the stern
 decree. 190

On the other side, I called to mind
 those truths
 That are the commonplaces of the
 schools—
 (A theme for boys, too hackneyed for
 their sires,)
 Yet, with a revelation's liveliness,
 In all their comprehensive bearings known
 And visible to philosophers of old, 196
 Men who, to business of the world un-
 trained,
 Lived in the shade; and to Harmodius
 known
 And his compeer Aristogiton, known
 To Brutus—that tyrannic power is weak,
 Hath neither gratitude, nor faith, nor
 love, 201
 Nor the support of good or evil men
 To trust in; that the godhead which is
 ours
 Can never utterly be charmed or stilled;
 That nothing hath a natural right to last
 But equity and reason; that all else 206
 Meets foes irreconcilable, and at best
 Lives only by variety of disease.

Well might my wishes be intense, my
 thoughts
 Strong and perturbed, not doubting at
 that time 210
 But that the virtue of one paramount
 mind
 Would have abashed those impious
 crests—have quelled
 Outrage and bloody power, and—in de-
 spite
 Of what the People long had been and
 were
 Through ignorance and false teaching,
 sadder proof 215
 Of immaturity, and—in the teeth
 Of desperate opposition from without—
 Have cleared a passage for just govern-
 ment,
 And left a solid birthright to the State,
 Redeemed, according to example given
 By ancient lawgivers.

In this frame of mind,
Dragged by a chain of harsh necessity,
So seemed it,—now I thankfully acknow-
ledge,

Forced by the gracious providence of
Heaven,—

To England I returned, else (though
assured 225

That I both was and must be of small
weight,

No better than a landsman on the deck
Of a ship struggling with a hideous storm)
Doubtless, I should have then made
common cause

With some who perished; haply perished
too, 230

A poor mistaken and bewildered offer-
ing,—

Should to the breast of Nature have gone
back,

With all my resolutions, all my hopes,
A Poet only to myself, to men

Useless, and even, beloved Friend! a
soul 235

To thee unknown!

Twice had the trees let fall
Their leaves, as often Winter had put on
His hoary crown, since I had seen the
surge

Beat against Albion's shore, since ear of
mine

Had caught the accents of my native
speech 240

Upon our native country's sacred ground.
A patriot of the world, how could I glide

Into communion with her sylvan shades,
Erewhile my tuneful haunt? It pleased
me more 244

To abide in the great City, where I found
The general air still busy with the stir

Of that first memorable onset made
By a strong levy of humanity

Upon the traffickers in Negro blood;
Effort which, though defeated, had re-
called 250

To notice old forgotten principles,
And through the nation spread a novel
heat

Of virtuous feeling. For myself, I own
That this particular strife had wanted
power

To rivet my affections; nor did now 255
Its unsuccessful issue much excite

My sorrow; for I brought with me the
faith

That, if France prospered, good men
would not long

Pay fruitless worship to humanity,
And this most rotten branch of human
shame, 260

Object, so seemed it, of superfluous pains,
Would fall together with its parent tree.

What, then, were my emotions, when in
arms

Britain put forth her freeborn strength
in league,

Oh, pity and shame! with those confede-
rate Powers! 265

Not in my single self alone I found,
But in the minds of all ingenuous youth,

Change and subversion from that hour.
No shock

Given to my moral nature had I known
Down to that very moment; neither lapse

Nor turn of sentiment that might be
named 271

A revolution, save at this one time;
All else was progress on the self-same path

On which, with a diversity of pace,
I had been travelling: this a stride at
once 275

Into another region. As a light
And pliant harebell, swinging in the
breeze

On some grey rock—its birthplace—so
had I

Wantoned, fast rooted on the ancient
tower

Of my beloved country, wishing not 280
A happier fortune than to wither there:

Now was I from that pleasant station torn
And tossed about in whirlwind. I re-
joiced,

Yea, afterwards—truth most painful to
record!—

Exulted, in the triumph of my soul, 285
When Englishmen by thousands were

O'erthrown,
Left without glory on the field, or driven,
Brave hearts! to shameful flight. It was
a grief,—

Grief call it not, 'twas anything but
that,— 289

A conflict of sensations without name,
Of which *he* only, who may love the sight

Of a village steeple, as I do, can judge,
When, in the congregation bending all

To their great Father, prayers were offered
up,

Or praises for our country's victories;
And, 'mid the simple worshippers, per-
chance 296

I only, like an uninvited guest
Whom no one owned, sate silent, shall
I add,

Fed on the day of vengeance yet to come.

Oh! much have they to account for, who
could tear, 300

By violence, at one decisive rent,
From the best youth in England their dear
pride,

Their joy, in England; this, too, at a
time

In which worst losses easily might wear
The best of names, when patriotic love

Did of itself in modesty give way, 306
Like the Precursor when the Deity

THE PRELUDE

[BOOK X

In come Whose harbinger he was; a time
In which apostasy from ancient faith
Seemed but conversion to a higher creed;
Withal a season dangerous and wild, 311
A time when sage Experience would have
snatched

Flowers out of any hedge-row to compose
A chaplet in contempt of his grey locks.

When the proud fleet that bears the
red-cross flag 315

In that unworthy service was prepared
To mingle, I beheld the vessels lie,
A brood of gallant creatures, on the deep;
I saw them in their rest, a sojourner
Through a whole month of calm and glassy
days 320

In that delightful island which protects
Their place of convocation—there I heard,
Each evening, pacing by the still sea-
shore,

A monitory sound that never failed,—
The sunset cannon. While the orb went
down 325

In the tranquillity of nature, came
That voice, ill requiem! seldom heard by
me

Without a spirit overcast by dark
Imaginations, sense of woes to come,
Sorrow for human kind, and pain of
heart. 330

In France, the men, who, for their
desperate ends,
Had plucked up mercy by the roots, were
glad
Of this new enemy. Tyrants, strong
before

In wicked pleas, were strong as demons
now;

And thus, on every side beset with foes,
The goaded land waxed mad; the crimes
of few 336
Spread into madness of the many; blasts
From hell came sanctified like airs from
heaven.

The sternness of the just, the faith of
those
Who doubted not that Providence had
times 340

Of vengeful retribution, theirs who
throned

The human Understanding paramount
And made of that their God, the hopes
of men

Who were content to barter short-lived
pangs

For a paradise of ages, the blind rage 345
Of insolent tempers, the light vanity
Of intermeddlers, steady purposes
Of the suspicious, slips of the indiscreet,
And all the accidents of life were pressed
Into one service, busy with one work. 350
The Senate stood aghast, her prudence
quenched,

Her wisdom stifled, and her justice scared,
Her frenzy only active to extol
Past outrages, and shape the way for new,
Which no one dared to oppose or mitigate.

Domestic carnage now filled the whole
year 356

With feast-days; old men from the
chimney-nook,

The maiden from the bosom of her love,
The mother from the cradle of her babe,
The warrior from the field—all perished,
all— 360

Friends, enemies, of all parties, ages,
ranks,

Head after head, and never heads enough
For those that bade them fall. They
found their joy,

They made it proudly, eager as a child,
(If like desires of innocent little ones 365
May with such heinous appetites be com-
pared),

Pleased in some open field to exercise
A toy that mimics with revolving wings
The motion of a wind-mill; though the
air

Do of itself blow fresh, and make the
vanes 370

Spin in his eyesight, that contents him
not,

But, with the plaything at arm's length,
he sets

His front against the blast, and runs
amain,
That it may whirl the faster.

Amid the depth
Of those enormities, even thinking minds
Forgot, at seasons, whence they had their
being; 376

Forgot that such a sound was ever heard
As Liberty upon earth: yet all beneath
Her innocent authority was wrought,
Nor could have been, without her blessed
name. 380

The illustrious wife of Roland, in the
hour

Of her composure, felt that agony,
And gave it vent in her last words. O
Friend!

It was a lamentable time for man,
Whether a hope had e'er been his or not;
A woeful time for them whose hopes
survived 386

The shock; most woeful for those few
who still

Were flattered, and had trust in human
kind:

They had the deepest feeling of the grief.
Meanwhile the Invaders fared as they
deserved: 390

The Herculean Commonwealth had put
forth her arms,
And throttled with an infant godhead's
might

The snakes about her cradle; that was
well,
And as it should be; yet no cure for them
Whose souls were sick with pain of what
would be 395

Hereafter brought in charge against man-
kind.

Most melancholy at that time, O Friend!
Were my day-thoughts,—my nights were
miserable;

Through months, through years, long
after the last beat

Of those atrocities, the hour of sleep 400
To me came rarely charged with natural
gifts,

Such ghastly visions had I of despair
And tyranny, and implements of death;
And innocent victims sinking under fear,
And momentary hope, and worn-out
prayer, 405

Each in his separate cell, or penned in
crowds

For sacrifice, and struggling with forced
mirth

And levity in dungeons, where the dust
Was laid with tears. Then suddenly the
scene

Changed, and the unbroken dream en-
tangled me 410

In long orations, which I strove to plead
Before unjust tribunals,—with a voice
Labouring, a brain confounded, and a
sense,

Death-like, of treacherous desertion, felt
In the last place of refuge—my own soul.

When I began in youth's delightful
prime 416

To yield myself to Nature, when that
strong

And holy passion overcame me first,
Nor day nor night, evening or morn, was
free

From its oppression. But, O Power
Supreme! 420

Without Whose care this world would
cease to breathe,

Who from the Fountain of Thy grace dost
fill

The veins that branch through every
frame of life,

Making man what he is, creature divine,
In single or in social eminence, 425

Above the rest raised infinite ascents
When reason that enables him to be

Is not sequestered—what a change is
here!

How different ritual for this after-worship,
What countenance to promote this second
love! 430

The first was service paid to things which
lie

Guarded within the bosom of Thy will.
Therefore to serve was high beatitude;

Tumult was therefore gladness, and the
fear

Ennobling, venerable; sleep secure, 435
And waking thoughts more rich than
happiest dreams.

But as the ancient Prophets, borne
aloft

In vision, yet constrained by natural laws
With them to take a troubled human
heart,

Wanted not consolations, nor a creed 440
Of reconciliation, then when they de-
nounced,

On towns and cities, wallowing in the
abyss

Of their offences, punishment to come;
Or saw, like other men, with bodily eyes,

Before them, in some desolated place, 445
The wrath consummate and the threat
fulfilled;

So, with devout humility be it said,
So, did a portion of that spirit fall

On me uplifted from the vantage-ground
Of pity and sorrow to a state of being

That through the time's exceeding fierce-
ness saw 451

Glimpses of retribution, terrible,
And in the order of sublime behests:

But, even if that were not, amid the awe
Of unintelligible chastisement, 455

Not only acquiescences of faith
Survived, but daring sympathies with
power,

Motions not treacherous or profane, else
why

Within the folds of no ungentle breast
Their dread vibration to this hour pro-
longed? 460

Wild blasts of music thus could find their
way

Into the midst of turbulent events;
So that worst tempests might be listened
to.

Then was the truth received into my
heart,

That, under heaviest sorrow earth can
bring, 465

If from the affliction somewhere do not
grow

Honour which could not else have been,
a faith,

An elevation, and a sanctity,
If new strength be not given nor old
restored,

The blame is ours, not Nature's. When
a taunt 470

Was taken up by scoffers in their pride,
Saying, 'Behold the harvest that we reap

From popular government and equality,'
I clearly saw that neither these nor aught

Of wild belief engrafted on their names
By false philosophy had caused the woe,

But a terrific reservoir of guilt 477

And ignorance filled up from age to age,
That could no longer hold its loathsome
charge,
But burst and spread in deluge through
the land. 480

And as the desert hath green spots, the
sea
Small islands scattered amid stormy waves
So *that* disastrous period did not want
Bright sprinklings of all human excellence,
To which the silver wands of saints in
Heaven 485

Might point with rapturous joy. Yet not
the less,

For those examples, in no age surpassed,
Of fortitude and energy and love,
And human nature faithful to herself
Under worst trials, was I driven to think
Of the glad times when first I traversed
France 491

A youthful pilgrim; above all reviewed
That eventide, when under windows bright
With happy faces and with garlands hung,
And through a rainbow-arch that spanned
the street, 495
Triumphal pomp for liberty confirmed,
I paced, a dear companion at my side,
The town of Arras, whence with promise
high

Issued, on delegation to sustain
Humanity and right, *that* Robespierre, 500
He who thereafter, and in how short time!
Wielded the sceptre of the Atheist crew.
When the calamity spread far and wide—
And this same city, that did then appear
To outrun the rest in exultation, groaned
Under the vengeance of her cruel son, 506
As Lear reproached the winds—I could
almost

Have quarrelled with that blameless
spectacle
For lingering yet an image in my mind
To mock me under such a strange re-
verse. 510

O Friend! few happier moments have
been mine

Than that which told the downfall of this
Tribe

So dreaded, so abhorred. The day de-
serves

A separate record. Over the smooth sands
Of Leven's ample estuary lay 515
My journey, and beneath a genial sun,
With distant prospect among gleams of sky
And clouds, and intermingling mountain-
tops,

In one inseparable glory clad,
Creatures of one ethereal substance met.
In consistency, like a diadem 521
Or crown of burning seraphs as they sit
In the empyrean. Underneath that pomp
Celestial, lay unseen the pastoral vales

Among whose happy fields I had grown
up 525

From childhood. On the fulgent spec-
tacle,

That neither passed away nor changed, I
gazed

Enrapt; but brightest things are wont to
draw

Sad opposites out of the inner heart,
As even their pensive influence drew from
mine. 530

How could it otherwise? for not in vain
That very morning had I turned aside

To seek the ground where, 'mid a throng
of graves,

An honoured teacher of my youth was
laid,

And on the stone were graven by his
desire 535

Lines from the churchyard elegy of Gray.
This faithful guide, speaking from his

death-bed,
Added no farewell to his parting counsel,

But said to me, 'My head will soon lie
low;'

And when I saw the turf that covered
him, 540

After the lapse of full eight years, those
words,

With sound of voice and countenance of
the Man,

Came back upon me, so that some few
tears

Fell from me in my own despite. But
now

I thought, still traversing that widespread
plain, 545

With tender pleasure of the verses graven
Upon his tombstone, whispering to my-
self:

He loved the Poets, and, if now alive,
Would have loved me, as one not desti-
tute

Of promise, nor belying the kind hope
That he had formed, when I, at his com-
mand, 551

Began to spin, with toil, my earliest
songs.

As I advanced, all that I saw or felt
Was gentleness and peace. Upon a small
And rocky island near, a fragment stood
(Itself like a sea rock) the low remains 556
(With shells encrusted, dark with briny
weeds)

Of a dilapidated structure, once
A Romish chapel, where the vested priest
Said matins at the hour that suited those
Who crossed the sands with ebb of morn-
ing tide. 561

Not far from that still ruin all the plain
Lay spotted with a variegated crowd
Of vehicles and travellers, horse and
foot,

Wading beneath the conduct of their
guide 565
In loose procession through the shallow
stream
Of inland waters; the great sea meanwhile
Heaved at safe distance, far retired. I
paused,
Longing for skill to paint a scene so bright
And cheerful, but the foremost of the
band 570
As he approached, no salutation given
In the familiar language of the day,
Cried, 'Robespierre is dead!'—nor was
a doubt,
After strict question, left within my mind
That he and his supporters all were
fallen. 575

Great was my transport, deep my
gratitude
To everlasting Justice, by this fiat
Made manifest. 'Come now, ye golden
times,'
Said I forth-pouring on those open sands
A hymn of triumph: 'as the morning
comes 580
From out the bosom of the night, come ye:
Thus far our trust is verified; behold!
They who with clumsy desperation
brought
A river of Blood, and preached that
nothing else

Could cleanse the Augean stable, by the
might 585
Of their own helper have been swept
away;
Their madness stands declared and
visible;
Elsewhere will safety now be sought, and
earth
March firmly towards righteousness and
peace.'—
Then schemes I framed more calmly,
when and how 590
The madding factions might be tran-
quillised,
And how through hardships manifold and
long
The glorious renovation would proceed.
Thus interrupted by uneasy bursts
Of exultation, I pursued my way 595
Along that very shore which I had
skimmed
In former days, when—spurring from the
Vale
Of Nightshade, and St. Mary's moulder-
ing fane,
And the stone abbot, after circuit made
In wantonness of heart, a joyous band
Of schoolboys hastening to their distant
home 600
Along the margin of the moonlight sea—
We beat with thundering hoofs the level
sand.

BOOK ELEVENTH

FRANCE—(CONCLUDED)

FROM that time forth, Authority in France
Put on a milder face; Terror had ceased,
Yet everything was wanting that might
give
Courage to them who looked for good by
light
Of rational Experience, for the shoots 5
And hopeful blossoms of a second spring:
Yet, in me, confidence was unimpaired;
The Senate's language, and the public acts
And measures of the Government, though
both
Weak, and of heartless omen, had not
power 10
To daunt me; in the People was my trust,
And in the virtues which mine eyes had
seen.
(I knew that wound external could not
take
Life from the young Republic; that new
foes
Would only follow, in the path of shame,
Their brethren, and her triumphs be in
the end 16
Great, universal, irresistible.)

This intuition led me to confound
One victory with another, higher far,—
Triumphs of unambitious peace at home,
And noiseless fortitude. Beholding still
Resistance strong as heretofore, I thought
That what was in degree the same was
likewise
The same in quality,—that, as the worse
Of the two spirits then at strife remained
Untired, the better, surely, would pre-
serve 26
The heart that first had roused him.
Youth maintains,
In all conditions of society,
Communion more direct and intimate
With Nature,—hence, oftentimes, with
reason too— 30
Than age or manhood, even. To Nature,
then,
Power had reverted: habit, custom, law,
Had left an interregnum's open space
For her to move about in, uncontrolled.
Hence could I see how Babel-like their
task, 35
Who, by the recent deluge stupefied,

THE PRELUDE

[BOOK XI

With ~~their~~ whole souls went culling from
the day

Its petty promises, to build a tower
For their own safety; laughed with my
compeers

At gravest heads, by enmity to France
Distempered, till they found, in every
blast

Forced from the street-disturbing news-
man's horn,

For her great cause record or prophecy
Of utter ruin. How might we believe
That wisdom could, in any shape, come
near

Men clinging to delusions so insane?
And thus, experience proving that no few
Of our opinions had been just, we took
Like credit to ourselves where less was
due,

And thought that other notions were as
sound,

Yea, could not but be right, because we
saw

That foolish men opposed them.

To a strain
More animated I might here give way,
And tell, since juvenile errors are my
theme,

What in those days through Britain was
performed

To turn *all* judgments out of their right
course;

But this is passion over-near ourselves,
Reality too close and too intense,
And intermixed with something, in my
mind,

Of scorn and condemnation personal, 60
That would profane the sanctity of verse.
Our Shepherds, this say merely, at that
time

Acted, or seemed at least to act, like men
Thirsting to make the guardian crook of
law

A tool of murder; they who ruled the
State,—

Though with such awful proof before
their eyes

That he, who would sow death, reaps
death, or worse,

And can reap nothing better,—child-like
longed

To imitate, not wise enough to avoid;
Or left (by mere timidity betrayed) 70

The plain straight road, for one no better
chosen

Than if their wish had been to undermine
Justice, and make an end of Liberty.

But from these bitter truths I must
return

To my own history. It hath been told 75
That I was led to take an eager part

In arguments of civil polity,
Abruptly, and indeed before my time:

I had approached, like other youths, the
shield

Of human nature from the golden side,
And would have fought, even to the
death, to attest

The quality of the metal which I saw.
What there is best in individual man,

Of wise in passion, and sublime in power,
Benevolent in small societies,

And great in large ones, I had oft re-
solved,

Felt deeply, but not thoroughly under-
stood

By reason: nay, far from it; they were yet,
As cause was given me afterwards to learn,
Not proof against the injuries of the
day;

Lodged only at the sanctuary's door,
Not safe within its bosom. Thus pre-
pared,

And with such general insight into evil,
And of the bounds which sever it from
good,

As books and common intercourse with
life

Must needs have given—to the inex-
perienced mind,

When the world travels in a beaten road,
Guide faithful as is needed—I began

To meditate with ardour on the rule
And management of nations; what it is

And ought to be; and strove to learn
how far

Their power or weakness, wealth or
poverty,

Their happiness or misery, depends
Upon their laws, and fashion of the State.

(O pleasant exercise of hope and joy!¹
For mighty were the auxiliars which then

stood

Upon our side, us who were strong in
love!

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very Heaven! O

times,

In which the meagre, stale, forbidding
ways

Of custom, law, and statute, took at once
The attraction of a country in romance!

When Reason seemed the most to assert
her rights

When most intent on making of herself
A prime enchantress—to assist the work,

Which then was going forward in her
name!

Not favoured spots alone, but the whole
Earth,

The beauty wore of promise—that which
sets

(As at some moments might not be un-
felt

Among the bowers of Paradise itself) 120
¹ See page 165.—Ed.

The budding rose above the rose full blown.

What temper at the prospect did not wake
To happiness unthought of? The inert
Were roused, and lively natures rapt
away!

They who had fed their childhood upon
dreams, ¹²⁵

The play-fellows of fancy, who had made
All powers of swiftness, subtilty, and
strength

Their ministers,—who in lordly wise had
stirred

Among the grandest objects of the sense,
And dealt with whatsoever they found
there ¹³⁰

As if they had within some lurking right
To wield it;—they, too, who of gentle
mood

Had watched all gentle motions, and to
these

Had fitted their own thoughts, schemers
more mild,

And in the region of their peaceful
selves;— ¹³⁵

Now was it that *both* found, the meek
and lofty

Did both find, helpers to their hearts'
desire,

And stuff at hand, plastic as they could
wish,—

Were called upon to exercise their skill,
Not in Utopia,—subterranean fields,—

Or some secreted island, Heaven knows
where! ¹⁴¹

But in the very world, which is the world
Of all of us,—the place where, in the end,
We find our happiness, or not at all!

Why should I not confess that Earth
was then ¹⁴⁵

To me, what an inheritance, new-fallen,
Seems, when the first time visited, to one

Who thither comes to find in it his home?
He walks about and looks upon the spot

With cordial transport, moulds it and
remoulds, ¹⁵⁰

And is half pleased with things that are
amiss,

'Twill be such joy to see them disappear.

An active partisan, I thus convoked
From every object pleasant circumstance

To suit my ends; I moved among man-
kind ¹⁵⁵

With genial feelings still predominant;
When erring, erring on the better part,

And in the kinder spirit; placable,
Indulgent, as not uninformed that men

See as they have been taught—Antiquity
Gives rights to error; and aware, no less,

That throwing off oppression must be
work

As well of License as of Liberty;

And above all—for this was more than
all— ¹⁶⁴

Not caring if the wind did now and then
Blow keen upon an eminence that gave

Prospect so large into futurity;
In brief, a child of Nature, as at first,

Diffusing only those affections wider
That from the cradle had grown up with
me, ¹⁷⁰

And losing, in no other way than light
Is lost in light, the weak in the more

strong.

In the main outline, such it might be
said

Was my condition, till with open war
Britain opposed the liberties of France.

This threw me first out of the pale of
love; ¹⁷⁶

Soured and corrupted, upwards to the
source,

My sentiments; was not, as hitherto,
A swallowing up of lesser things in great,

But change of them into their contraries;
And thus a way was opened for mis-
takes ¹⁸¹

And false conclusions, in degree as gross,
In kind more dangerous. What had been

a pride,

Was now a shame; my likings and my
loves

Ran in new channels, leaving old ones
dry; ¹⁸⁵

And hence a blow that, in maturer age,
Would but have touched the judgment,

struck more deep

Into sensations near the heart: mean-
time,

As from the first, wild theories were
afloat,

To whose pretensions, sedulously urged,
I had but lent a careless ear, assured ¹⁹¹

That time was ready to set all things
right,

And that the multitude, so long op-
pressed,

Would be oppressed no more.

But when events
Brought less encouragement, and unto
these ¹⁹⁵

The immediate proof of principles no
more

Could be entrusted, while the events
themselves,

Worn out in greatness, stripped of novelty,
Less occupied the mind, and sentiments

Could through my understanding's natural
growth ²⁰⁰

No longer keep their ground, by faith
maintained

Of inward consciousness, and hope that
laid

Her hand upon her object—evidence
Safer, of universal application, such

As could not be impeached, was sought
elsewhere. 205

But now, become oppressors in their
turn,
Frenchmen had changed a war of self-
defence

For one of conquest, losing sight of all
Which they had struggled for: up mounted
now, 209

Openly in the eye of earth and heaven,
The scale of liberty. I read her doom,
With anger vexed, with disappointment
sore,

But not dismayed, nor taking to the
shame

Of a false prophet. While resentment
rose

Striving to hide, what nought could heal,
the wounds 215

Of mortified presumption, I adhered
More firmly to old tenets, and, to prove
Their temper, strained them more; and
thus, in heat

Of contest, did opinions every day
Grow into consequence, till round my
mind 220

They clung, as if they were its life, nay
more,

The very being of the immortal soul.

This was the time, when, all things
tending fast

To depravation, speculative schemes—
That promised to abstract the hopes of
Man 225

Out of his feelings, to be fixed thence-
forth

For ever in a purer element—
Found ready welcome. Tempting region
that

For Zeal to enter and refresh herself,
Where passions had the privilege to work,
And never hear the sound of their own
names. 231

But, speaking more in charity, the dream
Flattered the young, pleased with ex-
tremes, nor least

With that which makes our Reason's
naked self

The object of its fervour. What delight!
How glorious! in self-knowledge and self-
rule, 236

To look through all the frailties of the
world,

And, with a resolute mastery shaking off
Infirmities of nature, time, and place,
Build social upon personal Liberty, 240
Which, to the blind restraints of general
laws

Superior, magisterially adopts
One guide, the light of circumstances,
flashed

Upon an independent intellect.

Thus expectation rose again; thus hope,
From her first ground expelled, grew
proud once more. 246

Oft, as my thoughts were turned to
human kind,
I scorned indifference; but, inflamed with
thirst

Of a secure intelligence, and sick 249
Of other longing, I pursued what seemed
A more exalted nature; wished that Man
Should start out of his earthly, worm-like
state,

And spread abroad the wings of Liberty,
Lord of himself, in undisturbed delight—
A noble aspiration! yet I feel 255
(Sustained by worthier as by wiser
thoughts)

The aspiration, nor shall ever cease
To feel it;—but return we to our course.

Enough, 'tis true—could such a plea
excuse

Those aberrations—had the clamorous
friends 260

Of ancient Institutions said and done
To bring disgrace upon their very names;
Disgrace, of which, custom and written
law,

And sundry moral sentiments as props
Or emanations of those institutes, 265
Too justly bore a part. A veil had been
Uplifted; why deceive ourselves? in sooth,
'Twas even so; and sorrow for the man
Who either had not eyes wherewith to
see,

Or, seeing, had forgotten! A strong shock
Was given to old opinions; all men's
minds 271

Had felt its power, and mine was both let
loose,

Let loose and goaded. After what hath
been

Already said of patriotic love,
Suffice it here to add, that, somewhat
stern 275

In temperament, withal a happy man,
And therefore bold to look on painful
things,

Free likewise of the world, and thence
more bold,

I summoned my best skill, and toiled,
intent

To anatomise the frame of social life;
Yea, the whole body of society 281

Searched to its heart. Share with me,
Friend! the wish

That some dramatic tale, endowed with
shapes

Livelier, and flinging out less guarded
words

Than suit the work we fashion, might set
forth 285

What then I learned, or think I learned,
of truth,

And the errors into which I fell, betrayed
By present objects, and by reasonings
false

From their beginnings, inasmuch as
drawn 289

Out of a heart that had been turned aside
From Nature's way by outward accidents,
And which was thus confounded, more
and more

Misguided, and misleading. So I fared,
Dragging all precepts, judgments, maxims,
creeds, 294

Like culprits to the bar; calling the mind,
Suspiciously, to establish in plain day

Her titles and her honours; now believ-
ing,

Now disbelieving; endlessly perplexed
With impulse, motive, right and wrong,
the ground 299

Of obligation, what the rule and whence
The sanction; till, demanding formal
proof,

And seeking it in everything, I lost
All feeling of conviction, and, in fine,
Sick, wearied out with contrarieties, 304
Yielded up moral questions in despair.

This was the crisis of that strong disease,
This the soul's last and lowest ebb; I
drooped,

Deeming our blessed reason of least use
Where wanted most: 'The lordly at-
tributes 309

Of will and choice,' I bitterly exclaimed,
'What are they but a mockery of a Being
Who hath in no concerns of his a test

Of good and evil; knows not what to fear
Or hope for, what to covet or to shun;
And who, if those could be discerned,
would yet 315

Be little profited, would see, and ask
Where is the obligation to enforce?
And, to acknowledged law rebellious, still,
As selfish passion urged, would act amiss;
The dupe of folly, or the slave of crime.'

Depressed, bewildered thus, I did not
walk 321

With scoffers, seeking light and gay re-
venge

From indiscriminate laughter, nor sate
down

In reconciliation with an utter waste
Of intellect; such sloth I could not brook,
(Too well I loved, in that my spring of
life, 326

Pains-taking thoughts, and truth, their
dear reward)

But turned to abstract science, and there
sought

Work for the reasoning faculty enthroned
Where the disturbances of space and
time— 330

Whether in matter's various properties

Inherent, or from human will and power
Derived—find no admission. Then it
was—

Thanks to the bounteous Giver of all
good!—

That the beloved Sister in whose sight
Those days were passed, now speaking in
a voice 336

Of sudden admonition—like a brook
That did but *cross* a lonely road, and now
Is seen, heard, felt, and caught at every
turn,

Companion never lost through many a
league— 340

Maintained for me a saving intercourse
With my true self; for, though bedimmed
and changed

Much, as it seemed, I was no further
changed

Than as a clouded and a waning moon:
She whispered still that brightness would
return, 345

She, in the midst of all, preserved me still
A Poet, made me seek beneath that name,
And that alone, my office upon earth;

And, lastly, as hereafter will be shown,
If willing audience fail not, Nature's self,
By all varieties of human love 351

Assisted, led me back through opening
day

To those sweet counsels between head
and heart

Whence grew that genuine knowledge,
fraught with peace,

Which, through the later sinkings of this
cause, 355

Hath still upheld me, and upholds me now
In the catastrophe (for so they dream,
And nothing less), when, finally to close

And seal up all the gains of France, a
Pope

Is summoned in to crown an Emperor—
This last opprobrium, when we see a
people, 361

That once looked up in faith, as if to
Heaven

For manna, take a lesson from the dog
Returning to his vomit; when the sun

That rose in splendour, was alive, and
moved 365

In exultation with a living pomp
Of clouds—his glory's natural retinue—

Hath dropped all functions by the gods
bestowed,

And, turned into a gewgaw, a machine,
Sets like an Opera phantom.

Thus, O Friend!
Through times of honour and through
times of shame 371

Descending, have I faithfully retraced
The perturbations of a youthful mind

Under a long-lived storm of great events—
A story destined for thy ear, who now,

Among the fallen of nations, dost abide

THE PRELUDE

[BOOK XI

Where Etna, over hill and valley, casts
 Her shadow stretching towards Syracuse,
 The city of Timoleon! Righteous Heaven!
 How are the mighty prostrated! They
 first, 380

They first of all that breathe should have
 awakened

When the great voice was heard from out
 the tombs

Of ancient heroes. If I suffered grief
 For ill-requited France, by many deemed
 A trifier only in her proudest day; 385
 Have been distressed to think of what
 she once

Promised, now is; a far more sober cause
 Thine eyes must see of sorrow in a land,
 To the reanimating influence lost
 Of memory, to virtue lost and hope, 390
 Though with the wreck of loftier years
 bestrewn.

But indignation works where hope is
 not,
 And thou, O Friend! wilt be refreshed.

There is
 One great society alone on earth:
 The noble Living and the noble Dead. 395

Thine be such converse strong and
 sanative,

A ladder for thy spirit to reascend
 To health and joy and pure contented-
 ness;

To me the grief confined, that thou art
 gone

From this last spot of earth, where Free-
 dom now 400

Stands single in her only sanctuary;
 A lonely wanderer art gone, by pain
 Compelled and sickness, at this latter day,
 This sorrowful reverse for all mankind.
 I feel for thee, must utter what I feel: 405
 The sympathies erewhile in part dis-
 charged,

Gather afresh, and will have vent again:
 My own delights do scarcely seem to me
 My own delights; the lordly Alps them-
 selves,

Those rosy peaks, from which the Morn-
 ing looks 410

Abroad on many nations, are no more
 For me that image of pure gladness
 Which they were wont to be. Through
 kindred scenes,

For purpose, at a time, how different!
 Thou tak'st thy way, carrying the heart
 and soul 415

That Nature gives to Poets, now by
 thought

Matured, and in the summer of their
 strength.

Oh! wrap him in your shades, ye giant
 woods,

On Etna's side; and thou, O flowery field

Of Enna! is there not some nook of thine,
 From the first playtime of the infant
 world 421

Kept sacred to restorative delight,
 When from afar invoked by anxious love?

Child of the mountains, among shep-
 herds reared,

Ere yet familiar with the classic page, 425
 I learnt to dream of Sicily; and lo,

The gloom, that, but a moment past, was
 deepened

At thy command, at her command gives
 way;

A pleasant promise, wafted from her
 shores,

Comes o'er my heart: in fancy I behold
 Her seas yet smiling, her once happy
 vales; 431

Nor can my tongue give utterance to a
 name

Of note belonging to that honoured isle,
 Philosopher or Bard, Empedocles,

Or Archimedes, pure abstracted soul! 435
 That doth not yield a solace to my grief:

And, O Theocritus,¹ so far have some
 Prevailed among the powers of heaven
 and earth,

By their endowments, good or great, that
 they

Have had, as thou reportest, miracles
 Wrought for them in old time: yea, not
 unmoved, 441

When thinking on my own beloved friend,
 I hear thee tell how bees with honey fed
 Divine Comates, by his impious lord

Within a chest imprisoned; how they
 came 445

Laden from blooming grove or flowery
 field,

And fed him there, alive, month after
 month,

Because the goatherd, blessed man: had
 lips

Wet with the Muses' nectar.

Thus I soothe
 The pensive moments by this calm fire-
 side, 450

And find a thousand bounteous images
 To cheer the thoughts of those I love, and
 mine.

Our prayers have been accepted; thou
 wilt stand

On Etna's summit, above earth and sea,
 Triumphant, winning from the invaded
 heavens 455

Thoughts without bound, magnificent de-
 signs,

Worthy of poets who attuned their harps
 In wood or echoing cave, for discipline
 Of heroes; or, in reverence to the gods,

'Mid temples, served by sapient priests,
 and choirs 460

¹ Theocrit. Idyll. vii. 78.—Ed.

Of vines crowned with roses. Not in
vain
Those temples, where they in their ruins
yet
Survive for inspiration, shall attract
Thy solitary steps: and on the brink 464
Thou wilt recline of pastoral Arethuse;

Or, if that fountain be in truth no more,
Then, near some other spring—which by
the name
Thou gratulatest, willingly deceived—
I see thee linger a glad votary, 469
And not a captive pining for his home.

BOOK TWELFTH

IMAGINATION AND TASTE, HOW IMPAIRED AND
RESTORED

LONG time have human ignorance and
guilt
Detained us, on what spectacles of woe
Compelled to look, and inwardly op-
pressed
With sorrow, disappointment, vexing
thoughts,
Confusion of the judgment, zeal decayed,
And, lastly, utter loss of hope itself 6
And things to hope for! Not with these
began
Our song, and not with these our song
must end.—
Ye motions of delight, that haunt the
sides
Of the green hills; ye breezes and soft
airs, 10
Whose subtle intercourse with breathing
flowers,
Feelingly watched, might teach Man's
haughty race
How without injury to take, to give
Without offence; ye who, as if to show
The wondrous influence of power gently
used, 15
Bend the complying heads of lordly pines,
And, with a touch, shift the stupendous
clouds
Through the whole compass of the sky;
ye brooks,
Muttering along the stones, a busy noise
By day, a quiet sound in silent night; 20
Ye waves, that out of the great deep steal
forth
In a calm hour to kiss the pebbly shore,
Not mute, and then retire, fearing no
storm;
And you, ye groves, whose ministry it is
To interpose the covert of your shades, 25
Even as a sleep, between the heart of man
And outward troubles, between man him-
self,
Not seldom, and his own uneasy heart:
Oh! that I had a music and a voice
Harmonious as your own, that I might
tell 30
What ye have done for me. The morning
shines,

Nor heedeth Man's perverseness; Spring
returns,—
I saw the Spring return, and could rejoice,
In common with the children of her love,
Piping on boughs, or sporting on fresh
fields, 35
Or boldly seeking pleasure nearer heaven
On wings that navigate cerulean skies.
So neither were complacency, nor peace,
Nor tender yearnings, wanting for my
good
Through these distracted times; in
Nature still 40
Glorying, I found a counterpoise in her,
Which, when the spirit of evil reached its
height,
Maintained for me a secret happiness.

This narrative, my Friend! hath chiefly
told
Of intellectual power, fostering love, 45
Dispensing truth, and, over men and
things,
Where reason yet might hesitate, diffusing
Prophetic sympathies of genial faith:
So was I favoured—such my happy lot—
Until that natural graciousness of mind
Gave way to overpressure from the times
And their disastrous issues. What availed,
When spells forbade the voyager to land,
That fragrant notice of a pleasant shore
Wafted, at intervals, from many a bower
Of blissful gratitude and fearless love? 56
Dare I avow that wish was mine to see,
And hope that future times would surely
see,
The man to come, parted, as by a gulph,
From him who had been; that I could no
more 60
Trust the elevation which had made me
one
With the great family that still survives
To illuminate the abyss of ages past,
Sage, warrior, patriot, hero; for it seemed
That their best virtues were not free from
taint 65
Of something false and weak, that could
not stand

The open eye of Reason. Then I said,
 'Go to the Poets, they will speak to thee
 More perfectly of purer creatures;—yet
 If reason be nobility in man, 70
 Can aught be more ignoble than the man
 Whom they delight in, blinded as he is
 By prejudice, the miserable slave
 Of low ambition or distempered love?'

In such strange passion, if I may once
 more 75
 Review the past, I warred against my-
 self—

A bigot to a new idolatry—
 Like a cowed monk who hath forsworn
 the world,

Zealously laboured to cut off my heart
 From all the sources of her former
 strength; 80

And as, by simple waving of a wand,
 The wizard instantaneously dissolves
 Palace or grove, even so could I unsoul
 As readily by syllogistic words
 Those mysteries of being which have
 made, 85

And shall continue evermore to make
 Of the whole human race one brother-
 hood.

What wonder, then, if, to a mind so far
 Perverted, even the visible Universe
 Fell under the dominion of a taste 90
 Less spiritual, with microscopic view
 Was scanned, as I had scanned the moral
 world?

✓ O Soul of Nature! excellent and fair!
 That didst rejoice with me, with whom I,
 too,

Rejoiced through early youth, before the
 winds 95

And roaring waters, and in lights and
 shades

That marched and countermarched about
 the hills

In glorious apparition, Powers on whom
 I daily waited, now all eye and now 99
 All ear; but never long without the heart
 Employed, and man's unfolding intellect:
 O Soul of Nature! that, by laws divine
 Sustained and governed, still dost over-
 flow

With an impassioned life, what feeble
 ones

Walk on this earth! how feeble have I
 been 105

When thou wert in thy strength! Nor
 this through stroke

Of human suffering, such as justifies
 Remissness and inaptitude of mind,
 But through presumption; even in plea-
 sure pleased 109

Unworthily, disliking here, and there
 Liking; by rules of mimic art transferred

To things above all art; but more,—for
 this,

Although a strong infection of the age,
 Was never much my habit—going way

To a comparison of scene with scene, 115
 Bent overmuch on superficial things,

Pampering myself with meagre novelties
 Of colour and proportion; to the moods
 Of time and season, to the moral power,

The affections and the spirit of the place,
 Insensible. Nor only did the love 121

Of sitting thus in judgment interrupt
 My deeper feelings, but another cause,

More subtle and less easily explained,
 That almost seems inherent in the crea-
 ture, 125

A twofold frame of body and of mind.
 I speak in recollection of a time

When the bodily eye, in every stage of
 life

The most despotic of our senses, gained
 Such strength in me as often held my
 mind 130

In absolute dominion. Gladly here,
 Entering upon abstruser argument,

Could I endeavour to unfold the means
 Which Nature studiously employs to
 thwart

This tyranny, summons all the senses
 each 135

To counteract the other, and themselves,
 And makes them all, and the objects with
 which all

Are conversant, subservient in their turn
 To the great ends of Liberty and Power.

But leave we this: enough that my
 delights 140

(Such as they were) were sought insati-
 ably.

Vivid the transport, vivid though not
 profound;

I roamed from hill to hill, from rock to
 rock,

Still craving combinations of new forms,
 New pleasure, wider empire for the sight,

Proud of her own endowments, and re-
 joiced 146

To lay the inner faculties asleep.
 Amid the turns and counterturns, the
 strife

And various trials of our complex being,
 As we grow up, such thralldom of that
 sense 150

Seems hard to shun. (And yet I knew a
 maid

A young enthusiast, who escaped these
 bonds;

Her eye was not the mistress of her
 heart;

Far less did rules prescribed by passive
 taste,

Or barren intermeddling subtleties, 155
 Perplex her mind; but, wise as women
 are

When genial circumstance hath favoured them,

She welcomed what was given, and craved no more;

Whate'er the scene presented to her view
That was the best, to that she was attuned
By her benign simplicity of life, 161
And through a perfect happiness of soul,
Whose variegated feelings were in this
Sisters, that they were each some new
delight.

Birds in the bower, and lambs in the
green field, 165

Could they have known her, would have
loved; methought

Her very presence such a sweetness
breathed,

That flowers, and trees, and even the
silent hills,

And everything she looked on, should
have had

An intimation how she bore herself, 170
Towards them and to all creatures, God
delights

In such a being; for, her common thoughts
Are piety, her life is gratitude.

Even like this maid, before I was called
forth 174

From the retirement of my native hills,
I loved whate'er I saw: nor lightly loved,

But most intensely; never dreamt of
aught

More grand, more fair, more exquisitely
framed

Than those few nooks to which my happy
feet

Were limited. I had not at that time
Lived long enough, nor in the least sur-
vived 181

The first diviner influence of this world,
As it appears to unaccustomed eyes.

Worshipping then among the depth of
things,

As piety ordained; could I submit 185
To measured admiration, or to aught

That should preclude humility and love?
I felt, observed, and pondered; did not

judge,

Yea, never thought of judging; with the
gift

Of all this glory filled and satisfied. 190
And afterwards, when through the gor-
geous Alps

Roaming, I carried with me the same
heart:

In truth, the degradation—howsoe'er
Induced, effect, in whatsoe'er degree,

Of custom that prepares a partial scale
In which the little oft outweighs the
great; 196

Or any other cause that hath been
named;

Or lastly, aggravated by the times

And their impassioned sounds, which
well might make 199

The milder minstrelies of rural scenes
Inaudible—was transient; I had known

Too forcibly, too early in my life,
Visitings of imaginative power

For this to last: I shook the habit off 205
Entirely and for ever, and again
In Nature's presence stood, as now I
stand,

A sensitive being, a creative soul.

There are in our existence spots of time,
That with distinct pre-eminence retain

A renovating virtue, whence, depressed
By false opinion and contentious thought,

Or aught of heavier or more deadly
weight,

In trivial occupations, and the round
Of ordinary intercourse, our minds 214

Are nourished and invisibly repaired;
A virtue, by which pleasure is enhanced,

That penetrates, enables us to mount,
When high, more high, and lifts us up

when fallen.

This efficacious spirit chiefly lurks
Among those passages of life that give

Profoundest knowledge to what point,
and how, 221

The mind is lord and master—outward
sense

The obedient servant of her will. Such
moments

Are scattered everywhere, taking their
date

From our first childhood (I remember
well, 225

That once, while yet my inexperienced
hand

Could scarcely hold a bridle, with proud
hopes

I mounted, and we journeyed towards
the hills:

An ancient servant of my father's house
Was with me, my encourager and guide:

We had not travelled long, ere some mis-
chance 231

Disjoined me from my comrade; and,
through fear

Dismounting, down the rough and stony
moor

I led my horse, and, stumbling on, at
length

Came to a bottom, where in former times
A murderer had been hung in iron chains.

The gibbet-mast had mouldered down,
the bones 237

And iron case were gone; but on the
turf,

Hard by, soon after that fell deed was
wrought,

Some unknown hand had carved the
murderer's name. 240

The monumental letters were inscribed

THE PRELUDE

[BOOK XII]

In times long past; but still, from year to year

By superstitution of the neighbourhood,
The grass is cleared away, and to this hour

The characters are fresh and visible: 245
A casual glance had shown them, and I fled,
Faltering and faint, and ignorant of the road:

Then, reascending the bare common, saw
A naked pool that lay beneath the hills,
The beacon on the summit, and, more near, 250

A girl, who bore a pitcher on her head,
And seemed with difficult steps to force her way

Against the blowing wind. It was, in truth,

An ordinary sight; but I should need
Colours and words that are unknown to man, 255

To paint the visionary dreariness
Which, while I looked all round for my lost guide,

Invested moorland waste, and naked pool,
The beacon crowning the lone eminence,
The female and her garments vexed and tossed 260

By the strong wind. When, in the blessed hours

Of early love, the loved one at my side,
I roamed, in daily presence of this scene,
Upon the naked pool and dreary crags,
And on the melancholy beacon, fell 265
A spirit of pleasure and youth's golden gleam;

And think ye not with radiance more sublime

For these remembrances, and for the power

They had left behind? So feeling comes in aid

Of feeling, and diversity of strength 270
Attends us, if but once we have been strong.

Oh! mystery of man, from what a depth
Proceed thy honours. I am lost, but see
In simple childhood something of the base

On which thy greatness stands; but this I feel, 275

That from thyself it comes, that thou must give,

Else never canst receive. The days gone by

Return upon me almost from the dawn
Of life: the hiding-places of man's power

Open; I would approach them, but they close. 280

I see by glimpses now; when age comes on,
May scarcely see at all; and I would give,
While yet we may, as far as words can give,

Substance and life to what I feel, enshrining,

Such is my hope, the spirit of the Past
For future restoration.—Yet another 286
Of these memorials:—

One Christmas-time,
On the glad eve of its dear holidays,
Feverish, and tired, and restless, I went forth

Into the fields, impatient for the sight
Of those led palfreys that should bear us home; 291

My brothers and myself. There rose a crag,

That, from the meeting-point of two highways

Ascending, overlooked them both, far stretched;

Thither, uncertain on which road to fix
My expectation, thither I repaired, 296

Scout-like, and gained the summit; 'twas a day

Tempestuous, dark, and wild, and on the grass

I sate half-sheltered by a naked wall;
Upon my right hand crouched a single sheep, 300

Upon my left a blasted hawthorn stood;
With those companions at my side, I watched,

Straining my eyes intensely, as the mist
Gave intermitting prospect of the copse

And plain beneath. Ere we to school returned,— 305

That dreary time,—ere we had been ten days

Sojourners in my father's house, he died,
And I and my three brothers, orphans then,

Followed his body to the grave. The event,

With all the sorrow that it brought, appeared 310

A chastisement; and when I called to mind

That day so lately past, when from the crag

I looked in such anxiety of hope;
With trite reflections of morality, 314

Yet in the deepest passion, I bowed low
To God, Who thus corrected my desires;

And, afterwards, the wind and sleety rain,
And all the business of the elements,

The single sheep, and the one blasted tree,

And the bleak music from that old stone wall, 320

The noise of wood and water, and the mist
That on the line of each of those two roads

Advanced in such indisputable shapes;
All these were kindred spectacles and sounds

To which I oft repaired, and thence would drink, 325

As at a fountain; and on winter nights,
Down to this very time, when storm and
rain
Beat on my roof, or, haply, at noon
day,
While in a grove I walk, whose lofty trees,
Laden with summer's thickest foliage,
rock 330

In a strong wind, some working of the
spirit,
Some inward agitations thence are
brought,
Whate'er their office, whether to beguile
Thoughts over busy in the course they
took,
Or animate an hour of vacant ease. 335

BOOK THIRTEENTH

IMAGINATION AND TASTE, HOW IMPAIRED AND
RESTORED.—(CONCLUDED).

FROM Nature doth emotion come, and
moods
Of calmness equally are Nature's gift:
This is her glory; these two attributes
Are sister horns that constitute her
strength.
Hence Genius, born to thrive by inter-
change 5
Of peace and excitement, finds in her
His best and purest friend; from her
receives
That energy by which he seeks the truth,
From her that happy stillness of the mind
Which fits him to receive it when un-
sought. 10

Such benefit the humblest intellects
Partake of, each in their degree; 'tis mine
To speak, what I myself have known and
felt;
Smooth task! for words find easy way,
inspired
By gratitude, and confidence in truth. 15
Long time in search of knowledge did I
range
The field of human life, in heart and mind
Benighted; but, the dawn beginning now
To re-appear, 'twas proved that not in
vain
I had been taught to reverence a Power
That is the visible quality and shape 21
And image of right reason; that matures
Her processes by steadfast laws; gives
birth
To no impatient or fallacious hopes,
No heat of passion or excessive zeal, 25
No vain conceits; provokes to no quick
turns
Of self-applauding intellect; but trains
To meekness, and exalts by humble faith;
Holds up before the mind intoxicate 29
With present objects, and the busy dance
Of things that pass away, a temperate
show
Of objects that endure; and by this course
Disposes her, when over-fondly set
On throwing off incumbrances, to seek
In man, and in the frame of social life, 35

Whate'er there is desirable and good
Of kindred permanence, unchanged in
form
And function, or, through strict vicissi-
tude
Of life and death, revolving. Above all
Were re-established now those watchful
thoughts 40
Which, seeing little worthy or sublime
In what the Historian's pen so much de-
lights
To blazon—power and energy detached
From moral purpose—early tutored me
To look with feelings of fraternal love 45
Upon the unassuming things that hold
A silent station in this beauteous world.

Thus moderated, thus composed, I
found
Once more in Man an object of delight,
Of pure imagination, and of love; 50
And, as the horizon of my mind enlarged,
Again I took the intellectual eye
For my instructor, studious more to see
Great truths, than touch and handle
little ones.
Knowledge was given accordingly; my
trust 55
Became more firm in feelings that had
stood
The test of such a trial; clearer far
My sense of excellence—of right and
wrong:
The promise of the present time retired
Into its true proportion; sanguine schemes,
Ambitious projects, pleased me less; I
sought 61
For present good in life's familiar face,
And built thereon my hopes of good to
come.

With settling judgments now of what
would last
And what would disappear; prepared to
find 65
Presumption, folly, madness, in the men
Who thrust themselves upon the passive
world

As Rulers of the world; to see in these,
Even when the public welfare is their
aim,

Plans without thought, or built on theories
Vague and unsound; and having brought
the books 71

Of modern statists to their proper test,
Life, human life, with all its sacred claims
Of sex and age, and heaven-descended
rights,

Mortal, or those beyond the reach of
death; 75

And having thus discerned how dire a
thing

Is worshipped in that idol proudly named
'The Wealth of Nations,' where alone
that wealth

Is lodged, and how increased; and having
gained

A more judicious knowledge of the worth
And dignity of individual man, 81

No composition of the brain, but man
Of whom we read, the man whom we be-
hold

With our own eyes—I could not but
enquire—

Not with less interest than heretofore, 85
But greater, though in spirit more sub-
dued—

Why is this glorious creature to be found
One only in ten thousand? What one is,
Why may not millions be? What bars
are thrown

By Nature in the way of such a hope? 90
Our animal appetites and daily wants,
Are these obstructions insurmountable?

If not, then others vanish into air.
'Inspect the basis of the social pile:

Enquire,' said I, 'how much of mental
power 95

And genuine virtue they possess who live
'By bodily toil, labour exceeding far

Their due proportion, under all the weight
Of that injustice which upon ourselves
Ourselves entail.' Such estimate to frame
I chiefly looked (what need to look
beyond?) 101

Among the natural abodes of men,
Fields with their rural works; recalled to
mind

My earliest notices; with these compared
The observations made in later youth,

And to that day continued.—For, the
time 106

Had never been when throes of mighty
Nations

And the world's tumult unto me could
yield,

How far soe'er transported and possessed,
Full measure of content; but still I craved

An intermingling of distinct regards 111
And truths of individual sympathy

Nearer ourselves. Such often might be
gleaned

From the great City, else it must have
proved

To me a heart-depressing wilderness; 115
But much was wanting: therefore did I
turn

To you, ye pathways, and ye lonely roads;
Sought you enriched with everything I
prized,

With human kindnesses and simple joys.

Oh! next to one dear state of bliss,
vouchsafed 120

Alas! to few in this untoward world,
The bliss of walking daily in life's prime

Through field or forest with the maid we
love,

While yet our hearts are young, while yet
we breathe 124

Nothing but happiness, in some lone nook,
Deep vale, or anywhere, the home of
both,

From which it would be misery to stir:
Oh! next to such enjoyment of our youth,

In my esteem, next to such dear delight,
Was that of wandering on from day to
day 130

Where I could meditate in peace, and cull
Knowledge that step by step might lead
me on

To wisdom; or, as lightsome as a bird
Wafted upon the wind from distant lands,

Sing notes of greeting to strange fields or
groves, 135

Which lacked not voice to welcome me in
turn:

And, when that pleasant toil had ceased
to please,

Converse with men, where if we meet a
face

We almost meet a friend, on naked heaths
With long long ways before, by cottage
bench, 140

Or well-spring where the weary traveller
rests.

Who doth not love to follow with his eye
The windings of a public way? the sight,
Familiar object as it is, hath wrought

On my imagination since the morn 145
Of childhood, when a disappearing line,
One daily present to my eyes, that crossed

The naked summit of a far-off hill
Beyond the limits that my feet had trod,

Was like an invitation into space 150
Boundless, or guide into eternity.

Yes, something of the grandeur which
invests

The mariner who sails the roaring sea
Through storm and darkness, early in my
mind

Surrounded, too, the wanderers of the
earth; 155

Grandeur as much, and loveliness far
more.

Awed have I been by strolling Bedlam-
ites;

From many other uncouth vagrants
(passed

In fear) have walked with quicker step;
but why

Take note of this? When I began to
enquire, 160

To watch and question those I met, and
speak

Without reserve to them, the lonely roads
Were open schools in which I daily read
With most delight the passions of man-
kind,

Whether by words, looks, sighs, or tears,
revealed; 165

There saw into the depth of human souls,
Souls that appear to have no depth at all
To careless eyes. And—now convinced
at heart

How little those formalities, to which
With overweening trust alone we give

The name of Education, have to do 171

With real feeling and just sense; how vain
A correspondence with the talking world
Proves to the most; and called to make
good search

If man's estate, by doom of Nature yoked
With toil, be therefore yoked with igno-
rance; 176

If virtue be indeed so hard to rear,
And intellectual strength so rare a boon—

I prized such walks still more, for there
I found

Hope to my hope, and to my pleasure
peace 180

And steadiness, and healing and repose
To every angry passion. There I heard,

From mouths of men obscure and lowly,
truths

Replete with honour; sounds in unison
With loftiest promises of good and fair.

There are who think that strong
affection, love 186

Known by whatever name, is falsely
deemed

A gift, to use a term which they would
use,

Of vulgar nature; that its growth requires
Retirement, leisure, language purified

By manners studied and elaborate; 191

That whoso feels such passion in its
strength

Must live within the very light and air
Of courteous usages refined by art.

True is it, where oppression worse than
death 195

Salutes the being at his birth, where grace
Of culture hath been utterly unknown,

And poverty and labour in excess
From day to day pre-occupy the ground

Of the affections, and to Nature's self 200
Oppose a deeper nature; there, indeed,

Love cannot be; nor does it thrive with
ease

Among the close and overcrowded haunts
Of cities, where the human heart is sick,

And the eye feeds it not, and cannot
feed. 205

—Yes, in those wanderings deeply did
I feel

How we mislead each other; above all,
How books mislead us, seeking their

reward
From judgments of the wealthy Few,
who see

By artificial lights; how they debase 210

The Many for the pleasure of those Few;
Effeminately level down the truth

To certain general notions, for the sake
Of being understood at once, or else

Through want of better knowledge in the
heads 215

That framed them; flattering self-conceit
with words,

That, while they most ambitiously set
forth

Extrinsic differences, the outward marks
Whereby society has parted man

From man, neglect the universal heart.

Here, calling up to mind what then I
saw, 221

A youthful traveller, and see daily now
In the familiar circuit of my home,

Here might I pause, and bend in reverence
To Nature, and the power of human

minds, 225

To men as they are men within them-
selves.

How oft high service is performed within,
When all the external man is rude in

show,—
Not like a temple rich with pomp and
gold,

But a mere mountain-chapel, that pro-
tects 230

Its simple worshippers from sun and
shower.

Of these, said I, shall be my song; of
these,

If future years mature me for the task,
Will I record the praises, making verse

Deal boldly with substantial things; in
truth 235

And sanctity of passion, speak of these,
That justice may be done, obeisance paid

Where it is due: thus haply shall I teach,
Inspire; through unadulterated ears

Pour rapture, tenderness, and hope,—my
theme 240

No other than the very heart of man,
As found among the best of those who
live—

Not unexalted by religious faith,
Nor uninformed by books, good books,

though few— 244

THE PRELUDE

[BOOK XIII]

In Nature's presence: thence may I select
Sorrow, that is not sorrow, but delight;
And miserable love, that is not pain
To hear of, for the glory that redounds
Therefrom to human kind, and what we
are.

Be mine to follow with no timid step 250
Where knowledge leads me: it shall be
my pride

That I have dared to tread this holy
ground,

Speaking no dream, but things oracular;
Matter not lightly to be heard by those
Who to the letter of the outward promise
Do read the invisible soul; by men adroit
In speech, and for communion with the
world 257

Accomplished; minds whose faculties are
then

Most active when they are most eloquent,
And elevated most when most admired.

Men may be found of other mould than
these, 261

Who are their own upholders, to them-
selves

Encouragement, and energy, and will,
Expressing liveliest thoughts in lively
words 264

As native passion dictates. Others, too,
There are among the walks of homely life
Still higher, men for contemplation
framed,

Shy, and unpractised in the strife of
phrase:

Meek men, whose very souls perhaps
would sink

Beneath them, summoned to such inter-
course: 270

Theirs is the language of the heavens, the
power,

The thought, the image, and the silent joy:
Words are but under-agents in their souls;
When they are grasping with their greatest
strength,

They do not breathe among them: this
I speak 275

In gratitude to God, Who feeds our hearts
For His own service; knoweth, loveth us,
When we are unregarded by the world.

Also, about this time did I receive
Convictions still more strong than hereto-
fore, 280

Not only that the inner frame is good,
And graciously composed, but that, no
less,

Nature for all conditions wants not
power

To consecrate, if we have eyes to see,
The outside of her creatures, and to
breathe 285

Grandeur upon the very humblest face
Of human life. I felt that the array
Of act and circumstance, and visible form,

Is mainly to the pleasure of the mind
What passion makes them; that mean-
while the forms 290

Of Nature have a passion in themselves,
That intermingles with those works of
man

To which she summons him; although
the works

Be mean, have nothing lofty of their own;
And that the Genius of the Poet hence

May boldly take his way among mankind
Wherever Nature leads; that he hath
stood

By Nature's side among the men of old,
And so shall stand for ever. Dearest

Friend!

If thou partake the animating faith 300
That Poets, even as Prophets, each with
each

Connected in a mighty scheme of truth,
Have each his own peculiar faculty,

Heaven's gift, a sense that fits him to
perceive

Objects unseen before, thou wilt not
blame 305

The humblest of this band who dares to
hope

That unto him hath also been vouchsafed
An insight that in some sort he possesses,

A privilege whereby a work of his,
Proceeding from a source of untaught
things, 310

Creative and enduring, may become
A power like one of Nature's. To a hope

Not less ambitious once among the wilds
Of Sarum's Plain, my youthful spirit was
raised;

There, as I ranged at will the pastoral
downs 315

Trackless and smooth, or paced the bare
white roads

Lengthening in solitude their dreary line,
Time with his retinue of ages fled

Backwards, nor checked his flight until I
saw

Our dim ancestral Past in vision clear;
Saw multitudes of men, and, here and
there, 321

A single Briton clothed in wolf-skin vest,
With shield and stone-axe, stride across
the wold;

The voice of spears was heard, the rattling
spear

Shaken by arms of mighty bone, in
strength, 325

Long mouldered, of barbaric majesty.
I called on Darkness—but before the word

Was uttered, midnight darkness seemed
to take

All objects from my sight; and lo! again
The Desert visible by dismal flames; 330

It is the sacrificial altar, fed
With living men—how deep the groans!
the voice

Of those that crowd the giant wicker
thrills

The monumental hillocks, and the pomp
Is for both worlds, the living and the dead.
At other moments—for through that
wide waste 336

Three summer days I roamed) where'er
the Plain

Was figured o'er with circles, lines, or
mounds,

That yet survive, a work, as some divine,
Shaped by the Druids, so to represent
Their knowledge of the heavens, and
image forth 341

The constellations—gently was I charmed
Into a waking dream, a reverie

That, with believing eyes, where'er I
turned,

Beheld long-bearded teachers, with white
wands 345

Uplifted, pointing to the starry sky,
Alternately, and plain below, while breath
Of music swayed their motions, and the
waste

Rejoiced with them and me in those sweet
sounds.

This for the past, and things that may
be viewed 350

Or fancied in the obscurity of years
From monumental hints: and thou, O
Friend!

Pleased with some unpremeditated strains
That served those wanderings to beguile,
hast said

That then and there my mind had exer-
cised 355

Upon the vulgar forms of present things,
The actual world of our familiar days,
Yet higher power; had caught from them
a tone,

An image, and a character, by books
Not hitherto reflected. Call we this 360

A partial judgment—and yet why? for
then

We were as strangers; and I may not
speak

Thus wrongfully of verse, however rude,
Which on thy young imagination, trained

In the great City, broke like light from far.
Moreover, each man's Mind is to herself

Witness and judge; and I remember well
That in life's every-day appearances

I seemed about this time to gain clear sight
Of a new world—a world, too, that was fit

To be transmitted, and to other eyes 371
Made visible; as ruled by those fixed laws

Whence spiritual dignity originates,
Which do both give it being and maintain

A balance, an ennobling interchange 375
Of action from without and from within;

The excellence, pure function, and best
power

Both of the object seen, and eye that sees.

BOOK FOURTEENTH

CONCLUSION

IN one of those excursions (may they ne'er
Fade from remembrance!) through the

Northern tracts
Of Cambria ranging with a youthful
friend,

I left Bethgelert's huts at couching-time,
And westward took my way, to see the
sun 5

Rise, from the top of Snowdon. To the
door

Of a rude cottage at the mountain's base
We came, and roused the shepherd who
attends

The adventurous stranger's steps, a trusty
guide;

Then, cheered by short refreshment, sal-
lied forth. 10

It was a close, warm, breezeless summer
night,

Wan, dull, and glaring, with a dripping
fog

Low-hung and thick that covered all the
sky;

But, undiscouraged, we began to climb

The mountain-side. The mist soon girt
us round, 15

And, after ordinary travellers' talk
With our conductor, pensively we sank

Each into commerce with his private
thoughts:

Thus did we breast the ascent, and by
myself

Was nothing either seen or heard that
checked 20

Those musings or diverted, save that once
The shepherd's lurcher, who, among the
craggs,

Had to his joy unearthed a hedgehog,
teased

His coiled-up prey with barkings turbu-
lent.

This small adventure, for even such it
seemed 25

In that wild place and at the dead of
night,

Being over and forgotten, on we wound
In silence as before. With forehead bent

Earthward, as if in opposition set
Against an enemy, I panted up 30

With eager pace, and no less eager
thoughts.

Thus might we wear a midnight hour
away,

Ascending at loose distance each from
each,

And I, as chanced, the foremost of the
band;

When at my feet the ground appeared to
brighten,

And with a step or two seemed brighter
still;

Nor was time given to ask or learn the
cause,

For instantly a light upon the turf
Fell like a flash, and lo! as I looked up,

The Moon hung naked in a firmament 40
Of azure without cloud, and at my feet

Rested a silent sea of hoary mist.
A hundred hills their dusky backs up-

heaved
All over this still ocean; and beyond,

Far, far beyond, the solid vapours
stretched,

In headlands, tongues, and promontory
shapes,

Into the main Atlantic, that appeared
To dwindle, and give up his majesty,

Usurped upon far as the sight could reach.
Not so the ethereal vault; encroachment

none 50
Was there, nor loss; only the inferior stars

Had disappeared, or shed a fainter light
In the clear presence of the full-orbed

Moon,
Who, from her sovereign elevation, gazed

Upon the billowy ocean, as it lay 55
All meek and silent, save that through a

rift—
Not distant from the shore whereon we

stood,
A fixed, abysmal, gloomy, breathing-

place—
Mounted the roar of waters, torrents,

streams
Innumerable, roaring with one voice! 60

Heard over earth and sea, and, in that
hour,

For so it seemed, felt by the starry
heavens.

When into air had partially dissolved
That vision, given to spirits of the night

And three chance human wanderers, in
calm thought 65

Reflected, it appeared to me the type
Of a majestic intellect, its acts

And its possessions, what it has and
craves,

What in itself it is, and would become.
There I beheld the emblem of a mind 70

That feeds upon infinity, that broods
Over the dark abyss, intent to hear

Its voices issuing forth to silent light

In one continuous stream; a mind sus-
tained

By recognitions of transcendent power,
In sense conducting to ideal form, 76

In soul of more than mortal privilege.
One function, above all, of such a mind

Had Nature shadowed there, by putting
forth,

'Mid circumstances awful and sublime, 80
That mutual domination which she loves

To exert upon the face of outward things,
So moulded, joined, abstracted, so en-

dowed
With interchangeable supremacy,

That men, least sensitive, see, hear, per-
ceive, 85

And cannot choose but feel. The power,
which all

Acknowledge when thus moved, which
Nature thus

To bodily sense exhibits, is the express
Resemblance of that glorious faculty

That higher minds bear with them as
their own. 90

This is the very spirit in which they deal
With the whole compass of the universe:

They from their native selves can send
abroad

Kindred mutations; for themselves create
A like existence; and, when'er it dawns

Created for them, catch it, or are caught
By its inevitable mastery, 97

Like angels stopped upon the wing by
sound

Of harmony from Heaven's remotest
spheres.

Them the enduring and the transient
both 100

Serve to exalt; they build up greatest
things

From least suggestions; ever on the
watch,

Willing to work and to be wrought upon,
They need not extraordinary calls

To rouse them; in a world of life they
live, 105

By sensible impressions not enthralled,
But by their quickening impulse made

more prompt
To hold fit converse with the spiritual

world,
And with the generations of mankind

Spread over time, past, present, and to
come, 110

Age after age, till Time shall be no more.
Such minds are truly from the Deity,

For they are Powers; and hence the
highest bliss

That flesh can know is theirs—the con-
sciousness

Of Whom they are, habitually infused
Through every image and through every

thought, 116
And all affections by communion raised

From earth to heaven, from human to
divine;

Hence endless occupation for the Soul,
Whether discursive or intuitive; 120

Hence cheerfulness for acts of daily life,
Emotions which best foresight need not
fear,

Most worthy then of trust when most
intense.

Hence, amid ills that vex and wrongs that
crush

Our hearts—if here the words of Holy
Writ 125

May with fit reverence be applied—that
peace

Which passeth understanding, that repose
In moral judgments which from this pure
source

Must come, or will by man be sought in
vain.

Oh! who is he that hath his whole life
long 130

Preserved, enlarged, this freedom in him-
self?

For this alone is genuine liberty:
Where is the favoured being who hath
held

That course unchecked, unerring, and
untired,

In one perpetual progress smooth and
bright?— 135

A humbler destiny have we retraced,
And told of lapse and hesitating choice,

And backward wanderings along thorny
ways:

Yet—compassed round by mountain soli-
tudes,

Within whose solemn temple I received
My earliest visitations, careless then 141

Of what was given me; and which now I
range,

A meditative, oft a suffering, man—
Do I declare—in accents which, from
truth

Deriving cheerful confidence, shall blend
Their modulation with these vocal
streams— 146

That, whatsoever falls my better mind,
Revolving with the accidents of life,

May have sustained, that, howsoe'er mis-
led,

Never did I, in quest of right and wrong,
Tampor with conscience from a private
aim; 151

Nor was in any public hope the dupe
Of selfish passions; nor did ever yield
Wilfully to mean cares or low pursuits,

But shrunk with apprehensive jealousy
From every combination which might aid
The tendency, too potent in itself,

Of use and custom to bow down the soul
Under a growing weight of vulgar sense,

And substitute a universe of death 160

For that which moves with light and life
informed,

Actual, divine, and true. To fear and love,
To love as prime and chief, for there fear
ends,

Be this ascribed; to early intercourse,
In presence of sublime or beautiful forms,

With the adverse principles of pain and
joy— 166

Evil as one is rashly named by men
Who know not what they speak. By love
subsists

All lasting grandeur, by pervading love;
That gone, we are as dust.—Behold the
fields 170

In balmy spring-time full of rising flowers
And joyous creatures; see that pair, the
lamb

And the lamb's mother, and their tender
ways

Shall touch thee to the heart; thou callest
this love,

And not inaptly so, for love it is, 175
Far as it carries thee. In some green
bower

Rest, and be not alone, but have thou
there

The One who is thy choice of all the
world:

There linger, listening, gazing, with de-
light

Impassioned, but delight how pitiable!
Unless this love by a still higher love 181

Be hallowed, love that breathes not with-
out awe;

Love that adores, but on the knees of
prayer,

By heaven inspired; that frees from
chains the soul,

Lifted, in union with the purest, best, 185
Of earth-born passions, on the wings of
praise

Bearing a tribute to the Almighty's
Throne.

This spiritual Love acts not nor can
exist

Without Imagination, which, in truth,
Is but another name for absolute power

And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,
And Reason in her most exalted mood.

This faculty hath been the feeding source
Of our long labour: we have traced the
stream

From the blind cavern whence is faintly
heard 195

Its natal murmur; followed it to light
And open day; accompanied its course
Among the ways of Nature, for a time

Lost sight of it bewildered and engulfed;
Then given it greeting as it rose once
more 200

In strength, reflecting from its placid
breast

The works of man and face of human life;
And lastly, from its progress have we
drawn
Faith in life endless, the sustaining thought
Of human Being, Eternity, and God. 205

Imagination having been our theme,
So also hath that intellectual Love,
For they are each in each, and cannot
stand
Dividually.—Here must thou be, O Man!
Power to thyself; no Helper hast thou
here; 210

Here keepest thou in singleness thy state:
No other can divide with thee this work:
No secondary hand can intervene
To fashion this ability; 'tis thine,
The prime and vital principle is thine 215
In the recesses of thy nature, far
From any reach of outward fellowship,
Else is not thine at all. But joy to him,
Oh, joy to him who here hath sown, hath
laid 219

Here, the foundation of his future years!
For all that friendship, all that love can do,
All that a darling countenance can look
Or dear voice utter, to complete the man,
Perfect him, made imperfect in himself,
All shall be his: and he whose soul hath
risen 225

Up to the height of feeling intellect
Shall want no humbler tenderness; his
heart

Be tender as a nursing mother's heart;
Of female softness shall his life be full,
Of humble cares and delicate desires, 230
Mild interests and gentlest sympathies.

Child of my parents! Sister of my soul!
Thanks in sincerest verse have been else-
where

Poured out for all the early tenderness
Which I from thee imbibed: and 'tis
most true 235
That later seasons owed to thee no less;
For, spite of thy sweet influence and the
touch
Of kindred hands that opened out the
springs
Of genial thought in childhood, and in
spite

Of all that unassisted I had marked 240
In life or nature of those charms minute
That win their way into the heart by
stealth,
Still, to the very going-out of youth,
I too exclusively esteemed *that* love,
And sought *that* beauty, which, as Milton
sings, 245
Hath terror in it. Thou didst soften down
This over-sternness; but for thee, dear
Friend!

My soul, too reckless of mild grace, had
stood

In her original self too confident,
Retained too long a countenance severe;
A rock with torrents roaring, with the
clouds 251

Familiar, and a favourite of the stars:
But thou didst plant its crevices with
flowers,
Hang it with shrubs that twinkle in the
breeze,
And teach the little birds to build their
nests 255

And warble in its chambers. At a time
When Nature, destined to remain so long
Foremost in my affections, had fallen
back

Into a second place, pleased to become
A handmaid to a nobler than herself, 260
When every day brought with it some
new sense

Of exquisite regard for common things,
And all the earth was budding with these
gifts

Of more refined humanity, thy breath,
Dear Sister! was a kind of gentler spring
That went before my steps. Thereafter
came 266

One whom with thee friendship had early
paired;

She came, no more a phantom to adorn
A moment, but an inmate of the heart,
And yet a spirit, there for me enshrined
To penetrate the lofty and the low; 271
Even as one essence of pervading light
Shines in the brightest of ten thousand
stars,

And the meek worm that feeds her lonely
lamp
Couched in the dewy grass.

With such a theme,
Coleridge! with this my argument, of
thee 276

Shall I be silent? O capacious Soul!
Placed on this earth to love and under-
stand,

And from thy presence shed the light of
love,

Shall I be mute, ere thou be spoken of?
Thy kindred influence to my heart of
hearts 281

Did also find its way. Thus fear relaxed
Her overweening grasp; thus thoughts
and things

In the self-haunting spirit learned to take
More rational proportions; mystery, 285
The incumbent mystery of sense and soul,
Of life and death, time and eternity,
Admitted more habitually a mild
Interposition—a serene delight

In closer gathering cares, such as be-
come 290

A human creature, howsoe'er endowed,
Poet, or destined for a humbler name;
And so the deep enthusiastic joy,
The rapture of the hallelujah sent

From all that breathes and is, was chastened, stemmed 295
 And balanced by pathetic truth, by trust
 In hopeful reason, leaning on the stay
 Of Providence; and in reverence for duty,
 Here, if need be, struggling with storms,
 and there
 Strewing in peace life's humblest ground
 with herbs, 300
 At every season green, sweet at all hours.

And now, O Friend! this history is brought
 To its appointed close: the discipline
 And consummation of a Poet's mind,
 In everything that stood most prominent,
 Have faithfully been pictured; we have reached 306
 The time (our guiding object from the first)
 When we may, not presumptuously, I hope,
 Suppose my powers so far confirmed, and such 309
 My knowledge, as to make me capable
 Of building up a Work that shall endure.
 Yet much hath been omitted, as need was;
 Of books how much! and even of the other wealth
 That is collected among woods and fields,
 Far more: for Nature's secondary grace
 Hath hitherto been barely touched upon,
 The charm more superficial that attends
 Her works, as they present to Fancy's choice
 Apt illustrations of the moral world,
 Caught at a glance, or traced with curious pains. 320

Finally, and above all, O Friend! (I speak
 With due regret) how much is overlooked
 In human nature and her subtle ways,
 As studied first in our own hearts, and then 324
 In life among the passions of mankind,
 Varying their composition and their hue,
 Where'er we move, under the diverse shapes
 That individual character presents
 To an attentive eye. For progress meet,
 Along this intricate and difficult path,
 Whate'er was wanting, something had I gained, 331
 As one of many schoolfellows compelled,
 In hardy independence, to stand up
 Amid conflicting interests, and the shock
 Of various tempers; to endure and note
 What was not understood, though known to be; 336
 Among the mysteries of love and hate,
 Honour and shame, looking to right and left,

Unchecked by innocence too delicate,
 And moral notions too intolerant, 340
 Sympathies too contracted. Hence, when called
 To take a station among men, the step
 Was easier, the transition more secure,
 More profitable also; for the mind 344
 Learns from such timely exercise to keep
 In wholesome separation the two natures,
 The one that feels, the other that observes

Yet one word more of personal concern;—
 Since I withdrew unwillingly from France,
 I led an undomestic, vanderer's life, 350
 In London chiefly harboured, whence I roamed,
 Tarrying at will in many a pleasant spot
 Of rural England's cultivated vales
 Or Cambrian solitudes. A youth—(he bore
 The name of Calvert—it shall live, if words 355
 Of mine can give it life,) in firm belief
 That by endowments not from me withheld
 Good might be furthered—in his last decay
 By a bequest sufficient for my needs
 Enabled me to pause for choice, and walk 360
 At large and unrestrained, nor damped too soon
 By mortal cares. Himself no Poet, yet
 Far less a common follower of the world,
 He deemed that my pursuits and labours lay
 Apart from all that leads to wealth, or even 365
 A necessary maintenance insures,
 Without some hazard to the finer sense;
 He cleared a passage for me, and the stream
 Flowed in the bent of Nature.

Having now
 Told what best merits mention, further pains 370
 Our present purpose seems not to require,
 And I have other tasks. Recall to mind
 The mood in which this labour was begun,
 O Friend! The termination of my course
 Is nearer now, much nearer; yet even then, 375
 In that distraction and intense desire,
 I said unto the life which I had lived,
 Where art thou? Hear I not a voice from thee
 Which 'tis reproach to hear? Anon I rose
 As if on wings, and saw beneath me stretched 380
 Vast prospect of the world which I had been
 And was; and hence this Song, which like
 a lark

I have protracted, in the unwearied
 heavens
 Singing, and often with more plaintive
 voice
 To earth attempered and her deep-drawn
 sighs, 385
 Yet centring all in love, and in the end
 All gratulant, if rightly understood.

Whether to me shall be allotted life,
 And, with life, power to accomplish aught
 of worth,
 That will be deemed no insufficient plea
 For having given the story of myself, 391
 Is all uncertain: but, beloved Friend!
 When, looking back, thou seest, in clearer
 view

Than any liveliest sight of yesterday,
 That summer, under whose indulgent
 skies, 395
 Upon smooth Quantock's airy ridge we
 roved
 Unchecked, or loitered 'mid her sylvan
 combs,
 Thou in bewitching words, with happy
 heart,
 Didst chaunt the vision of that Ancient
 Man,

The bright-eyed Mariner, and rueful woes
 Didst utter of the Lady Christabel; 401
 And I, associate with such labour, steeped
 In soft forgetfulness the livelong hours,
 Murmuring of him who, joyous hap, was
 found,

After the perils of his moonlight ride, 405
 Near the loud waterfall; or her who sate
 In misery near the miserable Thorn;—
 When thou dost to that summer turn thy
 thoughts,

And hast before thee all which then we
 were,
 To thee, in memory of that happiness,
 It will be known, by thee at least, my
 Friend! 411

Felt, that the history of a Poet's mind
 Is labour not unworthy of regard:
 To thee the work shall justify itself.

The last and later portions of this gift
 Have been prepared, not with the buoy-
 ant spirits 416
 That were our daily portion when we
 first
 Together wantoned in wild Poesy,

But, under pressure of a private grief,
 Keen and enduring, which the mind and
 heart, 420
 That in this meditative history
 Have been laid open, needs must make
 me feel
 More deeply, yet enable me to bear
 More firmly; and a comfort now hath
 risen
 From hope that thou art near, and wilt
 be soon 425
 Restored to us in renovated health;
 When, after the first mingling of our tears
 'Mong other consolations, we may draw
 Some pleasure from this offering of my
 love.

Oh! yet a few short years of useful life,
 And all will be complete, thy race be
 run, 431

Thy monument of glory will be raised;
 Then, though (too weak to tread the ways
 of truth)

This age fall back to old idolatry, 434
 Though men return to servitude as fast
 As the tide ebbs, to ignominy and shame
 By nations sink together, we shall still
 Find solace—knowing what we have
 learnt to know,

Rich in true happiness if allowed to be
 Faithful alike in forwarding a day 440
 Of firmer trust, joint labourers in the
 work

(Should Providence such grace to us
 vouchsafe)

Of their deliverance, surely yet to come.
 Prophets of Nature, we to them will
 speak

A lasting inspiration, sanctified 445
 By reason, blest by faith: what we have
 loved,

Others will love, and we will teach them
 how;

Instruct them how the mind of man
 becomes

A thousand times more beautiful than
 the earth

On which he dwells, above this frame of
 things 450

(Which, 'mid all revolution in the hopes
 And fears of men, doth still remain un-
 changed)

In beauty exalted, as it is itself
 Of quality and fabric more divine.

THE EXCURSION

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM, EARL OF LONSDALE, K.G.

ETC., ETC.

OfT, through thy fair domains, illustrious Peer!
In youth I roamed, on youthful pleasures bent;
And mused in rocky cell or sylvan tent,
Beside swift-flowing Lowthor's current clear.
—Now, by thy care befriended, I appear
Before thee, LONSDALE, and this Work present,
A token (may it prove a monument!)
Of high respect and gratitude sincere.
Gladly would I have waited till my task
Had reached its close; but Life is insecure,
And Hope full oft fallacious as a dream:
Therefore, for what is here produced, I ask
Thy favour; trusting that thou wilt not deem
The offering, though imperfect, premature.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, WESTMORELAND,
July 29, 1814.

PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1814

THE Title-page announces that this is only a portion of a poem; and the Reader must be here apprised that it belongs to the second part of a long and laborious Work, which is to consist of three parts.—The Author will candidly acknowledge that, if the first of these had been completed, and in such a manner as to satisfy his own mind, he should have preferred the natural order of publication, and have given that to the world first; but, as the second division of the Work was designed to refer more to passing events, and to an existing state of things, than the others were meant to do, more continuous exertion was naturally bestowed upon it, and greater progress made here than in the rest of the poem; and as this part does not depend upon the preceding, to a degree which will materially injure its own peculiar interest, the Author, complying with the earnest entreaties of some valued Friends, presents the following pages to the Public.

It may be proper to state whence the poem, of which 'The Excursion' is a part, derives its Title of THE RECLUSE.—Several years ago, when the Author retired to his native mountains, with the hope of being enabled to construct a literary Work that might live, it was a reasonable thing that he should take a review of his own mind, and examine how far Nature and Education had qualified him for such employment. As subsidiary to this preparation, he undertook to record, in verse, the origin and progress of his own powers, as far as he was acquainted with them. That Work, addressed to a dear Friend, most distinguished for his knowledge and genius, and to whom the Author's Intellect is deeply indebted, has been long finished; and the result of the investigation which gave rise to it was a determination to compose a philosophical poem, containing views of Man, Nature, and Society; and to be entitled, 'The Recluse;' as having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement.—The preparatory poem is biographical, and conducts the history of the Author's mind to the point when he was emboldened to hope that his faculties were sufficiently matured for entering upon the arduous labour which he had proposed to himself; and the two Works have the same kind of relation to each other, if he may so express himself, as the ante-chapel has to the body of a gothic church. Continuing this allusion, he may be permitted to add, that his minor Pieces, which have been long before the Public, when they shall be properly arranged, will be found by the attentive Reader to have such connection with the main Work as may give them claim to be likened to the little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses, ordinarily included in those edifices.

The Author would not have deemed himself justified in saying, upon this occasion, so much of performances either unfinished, or unpublished, if he had not thought that the labour bestowed by him upon what he has heretofore and now laid before the Public, entitled him to candid attention for such a statement as he thinks necessary to throw light upon his endeavours to please and, he would hope, to benefit his countrymen.—Nothing further need be added, than that the first and third parts of 'The Recluse' will consist chiefly of meditations in the Author's own person; and that in the intermediate part ('The Excursion') the intervention of characters speaking is employed, and something of a dramatic form adopted.

It is not the Author's intention formally to announce a system: it was more animating to him to proceed in a different course; and if he shall succeed in conveying to the mind clear thoughts, lively images, and strong feelings, the Reader will have no difficulty in extracting the system for himself. And in the meantime the following passage, taken from the conclusion of the first book of 'The Recluse,' may be acceptable as a kind of *Prospectus* of the design and scope of the whole Poem.

PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1814

'On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life,
 Musing in solitude, I oft perceive
 Fair trains of imagery before me rise,
 Accompanied by feelings of delight
 Pure, or with no unpleasant sadness mixed, 5
 And I am conscious of affecting thoughts
 And dear remembrances, whose presence soothes
 Or elevates the Mind, intent to weigh
 The good and evil of our mortal state.
 —To these emotions, whencesoe'er they come, 10
 Whether from breath of outward circumstance,
 Or from the Soul—an impulse to herself—
 I would give utterance in numerous verse.
 Of Truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love, and Hope, 15
 And melancholy Fear subdued by Faith;
 Of blessed consolations in distress;
 Of moral strength, and intellectual Power;
 Of joy in widest commonality spread;
 Of the individual Mind that keeps her own
 Inviolate retirement, subject there 20
 To Conscience only, and the law supreme
 Of that Intelligence which governs all—
 I sing:—"fit audience let me find though few!"

'So prayed, more gaining than he asked, the
 Bard—
 In holiest mood. Urania, I shall need 25
 Thy guidance, or a greater Muse, if such
 Descend to earth or dwell in highest heaven!
 For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink
 Deep—and, aloft ascending, breathe in worlds 30
 To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil.
 All strength—all terror, single or in bands,
 That ever was put forth in personal form—
 Jehovah—with his thunder, and the choir
 Of shouting Angels, and the empyreal thrones—
 I pass them unalarmed. Not Chaos, not 35
 The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
 Nor aught of blinder vacancy, scooped out
 By help of dreams—can breed such fear and awe
 As fall upon us often when we look 40
 Into our Minds, into the Mind of Man—
 My haunt, and the main region of my song.
 —Beauty—a living Presence of the earth,
 Surpassing the most fair ideal Forms
 Which craft of delicate Spirits hath composed
 From earth's materials—waits upon my steps; 45
 Pitches her tents before me as I move,
 An hourly neighbour. Paradise, and groves
 Elysian, Fortunate Fields—like those of old
 Sought in the Atlantic Main—why should they be 50
 A history only of departed things,
 Or a mere fiction of what never was?
 For the discerning intellect of Man,
 When wedded to this goodly universe

In love and holy passion, shall find these
 A simple produce of the common day. 55
 —I, long before the blissful hour arrives,
 Would chant, in lonely peace, the spousal verse
 Of this great consummation:—and, by words
 Which speak of nothing more than what we
 are,
 Would I arouse the sensual from their sleep 60
 Of Death, and win the vacant and the vain
 To noble raptures; while my voice proclaims
 How exquisitely the individual Mind
 (And the progressive powers perhaps no less
 Of the whole species) to the external World 65
 Is fitted:—and how exquisitely, too—
 Theme this but little heard of among men—
 The external World is fitted to the Mind;
 And the creation (by no lower name
 Can it be called) which they with blended might
 Accomplish:—this is our high argument. 71
 —Such grateful haunts foregoing, if I oft
 Must turn elsewhere—to travel near the tribes
 And fellowships of men, and see ill sights
 Of madding passions mutually inflamed; 75
 Must hear Humanity in fields and groves
 Pipe solitary anguish; or must hang
 Brooding above the fierce confederate storm
 Of sorrow, barricaded evermore
 Within the walls of cities—may these sounds 80
 Have their authentic comment; that even these
 Hearing, I be not downcast or forlorn!—
 Descend, prophetic Spirit! that inspir'st
 The human Soul of universal earth,
 Dreaming on things to come; and dost possess 86
 A metropolitan temple in the hearts
 Of mighty Poets: upon me bestow
 A gift of genuine insight; that my Song
 With star-like virtue in its place may shine,
 Shedding benignant influence, and secure, 90
 Itself, from all malevolent effect
 Of those mutations that extend their sway
 Throughout the nether sphere!—And if with this
 I mix more lowly matter; with the thing
 Contemplated, describe the Mind and Man 95
 Contemplating; and who, and what he was—
 The transitory Being that beheld
 This Vision; when and where, and how he lived;—
 Be not this labour useless. If such theme
 May sort with highest objects, then—dread Power!
 Whose gracious favour is the primal source 101
 Of all illumination,—may my Life
 Express the image of a better time,
 More wise desires, and simpler manners;—nurse
 My Heart in genuine freedom:—all pure thoughts
 Be with me:—so shall thy unflinching love 106
 Guide, and support, and cheer me to the end!"

THE EXCURSION

BOOK FIRST

THE WANDERER

ARGUMENT

A summer forenoon.—The Author reaches a ruined Cottage upon a Common, and there meets with a revered Friend, the Wanderer, of whose education and course of life he gives an account.—The Wanderer, while resting under the shade of the Trees that surround the Cottage, relates the History of its last Inhabitant.

'Twas summer, and the sun had mounted high;
Southward the landscape indistinctly glared
Through a pale steam; but all the northern downs,
In clearest air ascending, showed far off
A surface dappled o'er with shadows flung
From brooding clouds; shadows that lay in spots
Determined and unmoved, with steady beams
Of bright and pleasant sunshine interposed;
To him most pleasant who on soft cool moss
Extends his careless limbs along the front
Of some huge cave, whose rocky ceiling casts
A twilight of its own, an ample shade,
Where the wren warbles, while the dreaming man,
Half conscious of the soothing melody,
With side-long eye looks out upon the scene,
By power of that impending covert, thrown
To finer distance. Mine was at that hour
Far other lot, yet with good hope that soon
Under a shade as grateful I should find
Rest, and be welcomed there to livelier joy.
Across a bare wide Common I was toiling
With languid steps that by the slippery turf
Were baffled; nor could my weak arm disperse
The host of insects gathering round my face,
And ever with me as I paced along. 25

Upon that open moorland stood a grove,
The wished-for port to which my course was bound.
Thither I came, and there, amid the gloom
Spread by a brotherhood of lofty elms,

Appeared a roofless Hut; four naked walls
That stared upon each other!—I looked round,
And to my wish and to my hope espied
The Friend I sought; a Man of reverend age,
But stout and hale, for travel unimpaired.
There was he seen upon the cottage-bench,
Recumbent in the shade, as if asleep; 35
An iron-pointed staff lay at his side.

Him had I marked the day before—
Alone and stationed in the public way, with face
Turned toward the sun then setting, while that staff
Afforded, to the figure of the man
Detained for contemplation or repose,
Graceful support; his countenance as he stood
Was hidden from my view, and he remained
Unrecognised; but, stricken by the sight,
With slackened footsteps I advanced, and soon
A glad congratulation we exchanged
At such unthought-of meeting.—For the night
We parted, nothing willingly; and now
He by appointment waited for me here, so
Under the covert of these clustering elms.

We were tried Friends: amid a pleasant vale,
In the antique market-village where was passed
My school-time, an apartment he had owned,
To which at intervals the Wanderer drew,
And found a kind of home or harbour there.
He loved me; from a swarm of rosy boys
Singled out me, as he in sport would say,
For my grave looks, too thoughtful for my years.
As I grew up, it was my best delight
To be his chosen comrade. Many a time,

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK I

On holidays, we rambled through the woods:
We sate—we walked; he pleased me with report
Of things which he had seen; and often touched
Abstract matter, reasonings of the mind 65
Turned inward; or at my request would sing
Old songs, the product of his native hills;
A skilful distribution of sweet sounds,
Feeding the soul, and eagerly imbibed
As cool refreshing water, by the care 70
Of the industrious husbandman, diffused
Through a parched meadow-ground, in time of drought.
Still deeper welcome found his pure discourse:
How precious when in riper days I learned
To weigh with care his words, and to rejoice 75
In the plain presence of his dignity!

Oh! many are the Poets that are sown
By Nature; men endowed with highest gifts,
The vision and the faculty divine;
Yet wanting the accomplishment of verse,
(Which, in the docile season of their youth, 81
It was denied them to acquire, through lack
Of culture and the inspiring aid of books,
Or haply by a temper too severe,
Or a nice backwardness afraid of shame)
Nor having e'er, as life advanced, been led 86
By circumstance to take unto the height
The measure of themselves, these favoured Beings,
All but a scattered few, live out their time,
Husbanding that which they possess within, 90
And go to the grave, unthought of. Strongest minds
Are often those of whom the noisy world Hears least; else surely this Man had not left
His graces unrevealed and unproclaimed.
But, as the mind was filled with inward light, 95
So not without distinction had he lived,
Beloved and honoured—far as he was known.
And some small portion of his eloquent speech,
And something that may serve to set in view
The feeling pleasures of his loneliness,
His observations, and the thoughts his mind 101

Had dealt with—I will here record in verse;
Which, if with truth it correspond, and sink
Or rise as venerable Nature leads, 104
The high and tender Muses shall accept
With gracious smile, deliberately pleased,
And listening Time reward with sacred praise.

Among the hills of Athol he was born;
Where, on a small hereditary farm,
An unproductive slip of rugged ground,
His Parents, with their numerous offspring, dwelt; 111
A virtuous household, though exceeding poor!
Pure livers were they all, austere and grave,
And fearing God; the very children taught
Stern self-respect, a reverence for God's word, 115
And an habitual piety, maintained
With strictness scarcely known on English ground.

From his sixth year, the Boy of whom I speak,
In summer, tended cattle on the hills;
But, through the inclement and the perilous days 120
Of long-continuing winter, he repaired,
Equipped with satchel, to a school, that stood
Sole building on a mountain's dreary edge,
Remote from view of city spire, or sound
Of minster clock! From that bleak tement 125
He, many an evening, to his distant home
In solitude returning, saw the hills
Grow larger in the darkness; all alone
Beheld the stars come out above his head,
And travelled through the wood, with no one near 130
To whom he might confess the things he saw.

So the foundations of his mind were laid.
In such communion, not from terror free,
While yet a child, and long before his time,
Had he perceived the presence and the power 135
Of greatness; and deep feelings had impressed
So vividly great objects that they lay
Upon his mind like substances, whose presence
Perplexed the bodily sense. He had received
A precious gift; for, as he grew in years,
With these impressions would he still compare 141

All his remembrances, thoughts, shapes,
and forms;

And, being still unsatisfied with aught
Of dimmer character, he thence attained
An active power to fasten images 145
Upon his brain; and on their pictured
lines

Intensely brooded, even till they acquired
The liveliness of dreams. Nor did he fail,
While yet a child, with a child's eager-
ness

Incessantly to turn his ear and eye 150
On all things which the moving seasons
brought

To feed such appetite—nor this alone
Appeased his yearning:—in the after-day
Of boyhood, many an hour in caves
forlorn,

And 'mid the hollow depths of naked
crag 155

He sate, and even in their fixed linea-
ments,

Or by the power of a peculiar eye,
Or by creative feeling overborne,
Or by predominance of thought op-
pressed,

Even in their fixed and steady linea-
ments 160

He traced an ebbing and a flowing mind,
Expression ever varying!

Thus informed,
He had small need of books; for many a
tale

Traditionary round the mountains hung,
And many a legend, peopling the dark
woods, 165

Nourished Imagination in her growth,
And gave the Mind that apprehensive
power

By which she is made quick to recognise
The moral properties and scope of things.
But eagerly he read, and read again, 170
Whate'er the minister's old shelf sup-
plied;

The life and death of martyrs, who
sustained,

With will inflexible, those fearful pangs
Triumphantly displayed in records left
Of persecution, and the Covenant—times
Whose echo rings through Scotland to
this hour! 176

And there, by lucky hap, had been pre-
served

A straggling volume, torn and incomplete,
That left half-told the preternatural tale,
Romance of giants, chronicle of fiends,
Profuse in garniture of wooden cuts 181
Strange and uncouth; dire faces, figures
dire,

Sharp-kneed, sharp-elbowed, and lean-
ankled too,

With long and ghostly shanks—forms
which once seen 184
Could never be forgotten!

In his heart,

Where Fear sate thus, a cherished visitant,
Was wanting yet the pure delight of love
By sound diffused, or by the breathing air,
Or by the silent looks of happy things,
Or flowing from the universal face 190
Of earth and sky. But he had felt the
power

Of Nature, and already was prepared,
By his intense conceptions, to receive
Deeply the lesson deep of love which he,
Whom Nature, by whatever means, has
taught 195

To feel intensely, cannot but receive.

Such was the Boy—but for the growing
Youth

What soul was his, when, from the naked
top

Of some bold headland, he beheld the sun
Rise up, and bathe the world in light!
He looked— 200

Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth
And ocean's liquid mass, in gladness lay
Beneath him:—Far and wide the clouds
were touched,

And in their silent faces could he read
Unutterable love. Sound needed none,
Nor any voice of joy; his spirit drank
The spectacle: sensation, soul, and form,
All melted into him; they swallowed up
His animal being; in them did he live,
And by them did he live; they were his
life. 210

In such access of mind, in such high hour
Of visitation from the living God,
Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.
No thanks he breathed, he proffered no
request; 214

Rapt into still communion that transcends
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
That made him; it was blessedness and
love!

A Herdsman on the lonely mountain-
tops, 219

Such intercourse was his, and in this sort
Was his existence oftentimes possessed.
O then how beautiful, how bright, ap-
peared

The written promise! Early had he
learned

To reverence the volume that displays
The mystery, the life which cannot die;
But in the mountains did he feel his
faith. 226

All things, responsive to the writing, there
Breathed immortality, revolving life,
And greatness still revolving; infinite:
There littleness was not; the least of
things 230

Seemed infinite; and there his spirit
shaped

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK I

Her prospects, nor did he believe,—he saw.
What wonder if his being thus became
Sublime and comprehensive! Low desires,
Low thoughts had there no place; yet was
his heart 235

Lowly; for he was meek in gratitude,
Oft as he called those ecstasies to mind,
And whence they flowed; and from them
he acquired

Wisdom, which works thro' patience;
thence he learned 239

In oft-recurring hours of sober thought
To look on Nature with a humble heart,
Self-questioned where it did not under-
stand,

And with a superstitious eye of love.

So passed the time; yet to the nearest
town

He duly went with what small overplus
His earnings might supply, and brought
away 246

The book that most had tempted his
desires

While at the stall he read. Among the
hills

He gazed upon that mighty orb of song,
The divine Milton. Lore of different kind,
The annual savings of a toilsome life, 251
His Schoolmaster supplied; books that
explain

The purer elements of truth involved
In lines and numbers, and, by charm
severe,

(Especially perceived where nature droops
And feeling is suppressed) preserve the
mind 256

Busy in solitude and poverty.

These occupations oftentimes deceived
The listless hours, while in the hollow vale,
Hollow and green, he lay on the green
turf 260

In pensive idleness. What could he do,
Thus daily thirsting, in that lonesome life,
With blind endeavours? Yet, still upper-
most,

Nature was at his heart as if he felt,
Though yet he knew not how, a wasting
power 265

In all things that from her sweet influence
Might tend to wean him. Therefore with
her hues,

Her forms, and with the spirit of her
forms,

He clothed the nakedness of austere truth.
While yet he lingered in the rudiments
Of science, and among her simplest laws,
His triangles—they were the stars of
heaven,

The silent stars! Oft did he take delight
To measure the altitude of some tall crag
That is the eagle's birthplace, or some
peak 275

Familiar with forgotten years, that shows

Inscribed upon its visionary sides,
The history of many a winter storm,
Or obscure records of the path of fire.

And thus before his eighteenth year
was told, 280

Accumulated feelings pressed his heart
With still increasing weight; he was o'er-
powered

By Nature; by the turbulence subdued
Of his own mind; by mystery and hope,
And the first virgin passion of a soul 285
Communing with the glorious universe,
Full often wished he that the winds might
rage

When they were silent: far more fondly
now

Than in his earlier season did he love
Tempestuous nights—the conflict and the
sounds 290

That live in darkness. From his intellect
And from the stillness of abstracted
thought

He asked repose; and, failing oft to win
The peace required, he scanned the laws
of light

Amid the roar of torrents, where they
send 295

From hollow clefts up to the clearer air
A cloud of mist, that smitten by the sun
Varies its rainbow hues. But vainly thus,
And vainly by all other means, he strove
To mitigate the fever of his heart. 300

In dreams, in study, and in ardent
thought,

Thus was he reared; much wanting to
assist

The growth of intellect, yet gaining more,
And every moral feeling of his soul
Strengthened and braced, by breathing in
content 305

The keen, the wholesome, air of poverty,
And drinking from the well of homely life.
—But, from past liberty, and tried re-
straints,

He now was summoned to select the
course 309

Of humble industry that promised best
To yield him no unworthy maintenance.
Urged by his Mother, he essayed to teach
A village-school—but wandering thoughts
were then

A misery to him; and the Youth resigned
A task he was unable to perform. 315

That stern yet kindly Spirit, who con-
strains

The Savoyard to quit his naked rocks,
The freeborn Swiss to leave his narrow
vales,

(Spirit attached to regions mountainous
Like their own steadfast clouds) did now
impel 320

His restless mind to look abroad with hope.

—An irksome drudgery seem'd it to plod on,

Through hot and dusty ways, or pelting storm,

A vagrant Merchant under a heavy load Bent as he moves, and needing frequent rest; 325

Yet do such travellers find their own delight;

And their hard service, deemed debasing now,

Gained merited respect in simpler times; When squire, and priest, and they who round them dwelt

In rustic sequestration—all dependent Upon the PEDLAR'S toil—supplied their wants, 331

Or pleased their fancies, with the wares he brought.

Not ignorant was the Youth that still no few

Of his adventurous countrymen were led By perseverance in this track of life 335

To competence and ease:—to him it offered

Attractions manifold;—and this he chose.

—His Parents on the enterprise bestowed Their farewell! benediction, but with hearts

Foreboding evil. From his native hills He wandered far; much did he see of men, 341

Their manners, their enjoyments, and pursuits,

Their passions and their feelings; chiefly those

Essential and eternal in the heart.

That, 'mid the simpler forms of rural life, Exist more simple in their elements, 346

And speak a plainer language. In the woods,

A lone Enthusiast, and among the fields, Itinerant in this labour, he had passed

The better portion of his time; and there Spontaneously had his affections thriven

Amid the bounties of the year, the peace And liberty of nature; there he kept

In solitude and solitary thought His mind in a just equipoise of love. 355

Serene it was, unclouded by the cares Of ordinary life; unvexed, unwarped

By partial bondage. In his steady course, No piteous revolutions had he felt,

No wild varieties of joy and grief. 360

Unoccupied by sorrow of its own, His heart lay open; and, by nature tuned

And constant disposition of his thoughts To sympathy with man, he was alive

To all that was enjoyed where'er he went, 365

And all that was endured; for, in himself Happy, and quiet in his cheerfulness,

¹ See Note, p. 727.

He had no painful pressure from without That made him turn aside from wretchedness

With coward fears. He could afford to suffer 370

With those whom he saw suffer. Hence it came

That in our best experience he was rich, And in the wisdom of our daily life.

For hence, minutely, in his various rounds, He had observed the progress and decay

Of many minds, of minds and bodies too; The history of many families;

How they had prospered; how they were o'erthrown

By passion or mischance, or such misrule Among the unthinking masters of the earth 380

As makes the nations groan.

This active course He followed till provision for his wants

Had been obtained;—the Wanderer then resolved

To pass the remnant of his days, untasked With needless services, from hardship free. 385

His calling laid aside, he lived at ease: But still he loved to pace the public roads

And the wild paths; and, by the summer's warmth

Invited, often would he leave his home And journey far, revisiting the scenes 390

That to his memory were most endeared.

—Vigorous in health, of hopeful spirits, undamped

By worldly-mindedness or anxious care; Observant, studious, thoughtful, and refreshed

By knowledge gathered up from day to day; 395

Thus had he lived a long and innocent life.

The Scottish Church, both on himself and those

With whom from childhood he grew up, had held

The strong hand of her purity; and still Had watched him with an unrelenting eye.

This he remembered in his riper age 401

With gratitude, and reverential thoughts. But by the native vigour of his mind,

By his habitual wanderings out of doors, By loneliness, and goodness, and kind

works, 405

Whate'er, in docile childhood or in youth, He had imbibed of fear or darker thought

Was melted all away; so true was this, That sometimes his religion seemed to me

Self-taught, as of a dreamer in the woods; Who to the model of his own pure heart

Shaped his belief, as grace divine inspired, And human reason dictated with awe.

—And surely never did there live on earth

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK I

A man of kindlier nature. The rough
sports 415

And teasing ways of children vexed not
him;

Indulgent listener was he to the tongue
Of garrulous age; nor did the sick man's
tale,

To his fraternal sympathy addressed,
Obtain reluctant hearing.

Plain his garb; 420
Such as might suit a rustic Sire, prepared
For sabbath duties; yet he was a man
Whom no one could have passed without
remark.

Active and nervous was his gait; his
limbs

And his whole figure breathed intelli-
gence. 425

Time had compressed the freshness of his
cheek

Into a narrower circle of deep red,
But had not tamed his eye; that, under
brows

Shaggy and grey, had meanings which it
brought

From years of youth; which, like a Being
made 430

Of many Beings, he had wondrous skill
To blend with knowledge of the years to
come,

Human, or such as lie beyond the grave.

So was He framed; and such his course
of life 434

Who now, with no appendage but a staff,
The prized memorial of relinquished toils,
Upon that cottage-bench reposed his
limbs,

Screened from the sun. Supine the Wan-
derer lay,

His eyes as if in drowsiness half shut,
The shadows of the breezy elms above
Dappling his face. He had not heard the
sound 441

Of my approaching steps, and in the shade
Unnoticed did I stand some minutes'
space.

At length I hailed him, seeing that his
hat

Was moist with water-drops, as if the
brim 445

Had newly scooped a running stream. He
rose,

And ere our lively greeting into peace
Had settled, 'Tis,' said I, 'a burning day:
My lips are parched with thirst, but you,
it seems,

Have somewhere found relief.' He, at
the word, 450

Pointing towards a sweet-briar, bade me
climb

The fence where that aspiring shrub
looked out

Upon the public way. It was a plot
Of garden ground run wild, its matted
weeds

Marked with the steps of those, whom,
as they passed, 455

The gooseberry trees that shot in long
lank slips,

Or currants, hanging from their leafless
stems,

In scanty strings, had tempted to o'erleap
The broken wall. I looked around, and
there,

Where two tall hedge-rows of thick alder
boughs 460

Joined in a cold damp nook, espied a
well

Shrouded with willow-flowers and plummy
fern.

My thirst I slaked, and, from the cheer-
less spot

Withdrawing, straightway to the shade
returned

Where sate the old Man on the cottage-
bench; 465

And, while, beside him, with uncovered
head,

I yet was standing, freely to respire,
And cool my temples in the fanning air,

Thus did he speak. 'I see around me
here

Things which you cannot see: we die, my
Friend, 470

Nor we alone, but that which each man
loved

And prized in his peculiar nook of earth
Dies with him, or is changed; and very
soon

Even of the good is no memorial left. 474

—The Poets, in their elegies and songs
Lamenting the departed, call the groves,
They call upon the hills and streams to
mourn,

And senseless rocks; nor idly; for they
speak,

In these their invocations, with a voice
Obedient to the strong creative power 480

Of human passion. Sympathies there are
More tranquil, yet perhaps of kindred
birth,

That steal upon the meditative mind,
And grow with thought. Beside yon
spring I stood,

And eyed its waters till we seemed to feel
One sadness, they and I. For them a
bond 486

Of brotherhood is broken: time has been
When, every day, the touch of human
hand

Dislodged the natural sleep that binds
them up

In mortal stillness; and they ministered
To human comfort. Stooping down to
drink, 491

Upon the slimy foot-stone I espied

The useless fragment of a wooden bowl,
Green with the moss of years, and subject
only

To the soft handling of the elements: 495
There let it lie—how foolish are such
thoughts!

Forgive them;—never—never did my
steps

Approach this door but she who dwelt
within

A daughter's welcome gave me, and I
loved her

As my own child. Oh, Sir! the good die
first, 500

And they whose hearts are dry as summer
dust

Burn to the socket. Many a passenger
Hath blessed poor Margaret for her
gentle looks,

When she upheld the cool refreshment
drawn

From that forsaken spring; and no one
came 505

But he was welcome; no one went away
But that it seemed she loved him. She is
dead,

The light extinguished of her lonely hut,
The hut itself abandoned to decay,
And she forgotten in the quiet grave. 510

'I speak,' continued he, 'of One whose
stock
Of virtues bloomed beneath this lowly
roof.

She was a Woman of a steady mind,
Tender and deep in her excess of love;
Not speaking much, pleased rather with
the joy 515

Of her own thoughts: by some especial
care

Her temper had been framed, as if to
make

A Being, who by adding love to peace
Might live on earth a life of happiness.

Her wedded Partner lacked not on his
side 520

The humble worth that satisfied her
heart:

Frugal, affectionate, sober, and withal
Keenly industrious. She with pride would
tell

That he was often seated at his loom, 524
In summer, ere the mower was abroad

Among the dewy grass,—in early spring,
Ere the last star had vanished.—They who
passed

At evening, from behind the garden fence
Might hear his busy spade, which he
would ply,

After his daily work, until the light 530
Had failed, and every leaf and flower were
lost

In the dark hedges. So their days were
spent

In peace and comfort; and a pretty boy
Was their best hope, next to the God in
heaven.

'Not twenty years ago, but you I think
Can scarcely bear it now in mind, there
came 536

Two blighting seasons, when the fields
were left

With half a harvest. It pleased Heaven
to add

A worse affliction in the plague of war:
This happy Land was stricken to the
heart! 540

A Wanderer then among the cottages,
I, with my freight of winter raiment,
saw

The hardships of that season; many rich
Sank down, as in a dream, among the
poor;

And of the poor did many cease to be,
And their place knew them not. Mean-
while, abridged 546

Of daily comforts, gladly reconciled
To numerous self-denials, Margaret
Went struggling on through those cala-
mitous years

With cheerful hope, until the second
autumn, 550

When her life's Helpmate on a sick-bed
lay,

Smitten with perilous fever. In disease
He lingered long; and, when his strength
returned,

He found the little he had stored, to meet
The hour of accident or crippling age, 555
Was all consumed. A second infant now
Was added to the troubles of a time

Laden, for them and all of their degree,
With care and sorrow: shoals of artisans
From ill-requited labour turned adrift 560
Sought daily bread from public charity,

They, and their wives and children—hap-
pier far

Could they have lived as do the little birds
That peck along the hedge-rows, or the
kite

That makes her dwelling on the mountain
rocks! 565

'A sad reverse it was for him who long
Had filled with plenty, and possessed in
peace,

This lonely Cottage. At the door he stood,
And whistled many a snatch of merry
tunes

That had no mirth in them; or with his
knife 570

Carved uncouth figures on the heads of
sticks—

Then, not less idly, sought, through every
nook

In house or garden, any casual work
Of use or ornament; and with a strange,

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK I

Amusing, yet uneasy, novelty, 575
He mingled, where he might, the various tasks

Of summer, autumn, winter, and of spring.

But this endured not; his good humour soon

Became a weight in which no pleasure was:

And poverty brought on a petted mood
And a sore temper: day by day he drooped, 581

And he would leave his work—and to the town

Would turn without an errand his slack steps;

Or wander here and there among the fields.

One while he would speak lightly of his babes, 585

And with a cruel tongue: at other times
He tossed them with a false unnatural joy:

And 'twas a rueful thing to see the looks
Of the poor innocent children. "Every smile,"

Said Margaret to me, here beneath these trees, 590

"Made my heart bleed."

At this the Wanderer paused;
And, looking up to those enormous elms,
He said, "Tis now the hour of deepest noon.

At this still season of repose and peace,
This hour when all things which are not at rest 595

Are cheerful; while this multitude of flies
With tuneful hum is filling all the air;
Why should a tear be on an old Man's cheek?

Why should we thus, with an untoward mind,

And in the weakness of humanity, 600

From natural wisdom turn our hearts away;

To natural comfort shut our eyes and ears;
And, feeding on disquiet, thus disturb
The calm of nature with our restless thoughts?'

He spake with somewhat of a solemn tone: 605

But, when he ended, there was in his face
Such easy cheerfulness, a look so mild,

That for a little time it stole away
All recollection; and that simple tale

Passed from my mind like a forgotten sound. 610

A while on trivial things we held discourse,

To me soon tasteless. In my own despite,
I thought of that poor Woman as of one

Whom I had known and loved. He had rehearsed 614

Her homely tale with such familiar power,
With such an active countenance, an eye

So busy, that the things of which he spake
Seemed present; and, attention now

relaxed,
A heart-felt chillness crept along my veins.

I rose; and, having left the breezy shade,
Stood drinking comfort from the warmer sun, 621

That had not cheered me long—ere, looking round

Upon that tranquil Ruin, I returned,
And begged of the old Man that, for my sake,

He would resume his story.

He replied, 625

'It were a wantonness, and would demand

Severe reproof, if we were men whose hearts

Could hold vain dalliance with the misery
Even of the dead; contented thence to draw

A momentary pleasure, never marked
By reason, barren of all future good. 631

But we have known that there is often found

In mournful thoughts, and always might be found,

A power to virtue friendly; were't not so,
I am a dreamer among men, indeed 635

An idle dreamer! 'Tis a common tale,
An ordinary sorrow of man's life,

A tale of silent suffering, hardly clothed
In bodily form.—But without further bidding

I will proceed.

While thus it fared with them,
To whom this cottage, till those hapless years, 641

Had been a blessed home, it was my chance

To travel in a country far remote;
And when these lofty elms once more

appeared
What pleasant expectations lured me on

O'er the flat Common!—With quick step I reached 646

The threshold, lifted with light hand the latch;

But, when I entered, Margaret looked at me

A little while; then turned her head away

Speechless,—and, sitting down upon a chair, 650

Wept bitterly. I wist not what to do,
Nor how to speak to her. Poor Wretch!

at last

She rose from off her seat, and then,—
O Sir!

I cannot tell how she pronounced my name:—

With fervent love, and with a face of grief 655

Unutterably helpless, and a look That seemed to cling upon me, she enquired

If I had seen her husband. As she spake A strange surprise and fear came to my heart,

Nor had I power to answer ere she told That he had disappeared—not two months gone. 661

He left his house; two wretched days had past,

And on the third, as wistfully she raised Her head from off her pillow, to look forth, 664

Like one in trouble, for returning light, Within her chamber-casement she espied A folded paper, lying as if placed To meet her waking eyes. This tremblingly

She opened—found no writing, but beheld Pieces of money carefully enclosed, 670 Silver and gold. “I shuddered at the sight,”

Said Margaret, “for I knew it was his hand

That must have placed it there; and ere that day

Was ended, that long anxious day, I learned,

From one who by my husband had been sent 675

With the sad news, that he had joined a troop

Of soldiers, going to a distant land. —He left me thus—he could not gather heart

To take a farewell of me; for he feared That I should follow with my babes, and sink 680

Beneath the misery of that wandering life.”

‘This tale did Margaret tell with many tears:

And, when she ended, I had little power To give her comfort, and was glad to take

Such words of hope from her own mouth as served 685

To cheer us both. But long we had not talked

Ere we built up a pile of better thoughts, And with a brighter eye she looked around

As if she had been shedding tears of joy. We parted.—’Twas the time of early spring; 690

I left her busy with her garden tools; And well remember, o’er that fence she looked,

And, while I paced along the foot-way path,

Called out, and sent a blessing after me, With tender cheerfulness, and with a voice 695 That seemed the very sound of happy thoughts.

‘I roved o’er many a hill and many a dale,

With my accustomed load; in heat and cold,

Through many a wood and many an open ground,

In sunshine and in shade, in wet and fair, 700

Drooping or b’lith of heart, as might befall;

My best companions now the driving winds,

And now the “trotting brooks” and whispering trees,

And now the music of my own sad steps, With many a short-lived thought that

passed between, 705 And disappeared.

I journeyed back this way, When, in the warmth of midsummer, the wheat

Was yellow; and the soft and bladed grass, Springing afresh, had o’er the hay-field

spread Its tender verdure. At the door arrived,

I found that she was absent. In the shade, 711

Where now we sit, I waited her return. Her cottage, then a cheerful object, wore

Its customary look,—only, it seemed, The honeysuckle, crowding round the

porch, 715 Hung down in heavier tufts; and that bright weed,

The yellow stone-crop, suffered to take root

Along the window’s edge, profusely grew Blinding the lower panes. I turned aside,

And strolled into her garden. It appeared To lag behind the season, and had lost

Its pride of neatness. Daisy-flowers and thrift

Had broken their trim border-lines, and straggled

O’er paths they used to deck: carnations, once 724

Prized for surpassing beauty, and no less For the peculiar pains they had required,

Declined their languid heads, wanting support.

The cumulous bind-weed, with its wreaths and bells,

Had twined about her two small rows of peas,

And dragged them to the earth. Ere this an hour

Was wasted.—Back I turned my restless steps; 731

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK I

A stranger passed; and, guessing whom I sought,

He said that she was used to ramble far.—
The sun was sinking in the west; and now
I sate with sad impatience. From within
Her solitary infant cried aloud; 736

Then, like a blast that dies away self-
stilled,

The voice was silent. From the bench I
rose;

But neither could divert nor soothe my
thoughts. 739

The spot, though fair, was very desolate—
The longer I remained, more desolate:

And, looking round me, now I first
observed

The corner stones, on either side the
porch,

With dull red stains discoloured, and
stuck o'er

With tufts and hairs of wool, as if the
sheep, 745

That fed upon the Common, thither came
Familiarly, and found a couching-place

Even at her threshold. Deeper shadows
fell

From these tall elms; the cottage-clock
struck eight;—

I turned, and saw her distant a few steps.
Her face was pale and thin—her figure,
too, 751

Was changed. As she unlocked the door,
she said,

“It grieves me you have waited here so
long,

But, in good truth, I’ve wandered much
of late;

And, sometimes—to my shame I speak—
have need 755

Of my best prayers to bring me back
again.”

While on the board she spread our evening
meal,

She told me—interrupting not the work
Which gave employment to her listless
hands—

That she had parted with her elder child;
To a kind master on a distant farm 761

Now happily apprenticed.—“I perceive
You look at me, and you have cause;
to-day

I have been travelling far; and many days
About the fields I wander, knowing
this 765

Only, that what I seek I cannot find;
And so I waste my time: for I am changed;
And to myself,” said she, “have done
much wrong

And to this helpless infant. I have slept
Weeping, and weeping have I waked; my
tears 770

Have flowed as if my body were not such
As others are; and I could never die.

But I am now in mind and in my heart

More easy; and I hope,” said she, “that
God

Will give me patience to endure the
things 775

Which I behold at home.”
It would have grieved

Your very soul to see her. Sir, I feel
The story linger in my heart; I fear

’Tis long and tedious; but my spirit clings
To that poor Woman:—so familiarly 780

Do I perceive her manner, and her look,
And presence; and so deeply do I feel

Her goodness, that, not seldom, in my
walks

A momentary trance comes over me; 784
And to myself I seem to muse on One

By sorrow laid asleep; or borne away,
A human being destined to awake

To human life, or something very near
To human life, when he shall come again

For whom she suffered. Yes, it would
have grieved 790

Your very soul to see her: evermore
Her eyelids drooped, her eyes downward
were cast;

And, when she at her table gave me
food,

She did not look at me. Her voice was
low, 794

Her body was subdued. In every act
Pertaining to her house-affairs, appeared

The careless stillness of a thinking mind
Self-occupied; to which all outward
things

Are like an idle matter. Still she sighed,
But yet no motion of the breast was seen,

No heaving of the heart. While by the
fire 801

We sate together, sighs came on my ear,
I knew not how, and hardly whence they
came.

‘Ere my departure, to her care I gave,
For her son’s use, some tokens of regard,

Which with a look of welcome she re-
ceived; 806

And I exhorted her to place her trust
In God’s good love, and seek his help by
prayer.

I took my staff, and, when I kissed her
babe,

The tears stood in her eyes. I left her
then 810

With the best hope and comfort I could
give:

She thanked me for my wish;—but for my
hope

It seemed she did not thank me.

I returned,
And took my rounds along this road again

When on its sunny bank the primrose
flower 815

Peeped forth, to give an earnest of the
Spring.

I found her sad and drooping: she had
 learned
 No tidings of her husband; if he lived,
 She knew not that he lived; if he were
 dead,
 She knew not he was dead. She seemed
 the same 820
 In person and appearance: but her house
 Bespake a sleepy hand of negligence;
 The floor was neither dry nor neat, the
 hearth
 Was comfortless, and her small lot of
 books,
 Which, in the cottage-window, heretofore
 Had been piled up against the corner
 panes 826
 In seemly order, now, with straggling
 leaves
 Lay scattered here and there, open or shut,
 As they had chanced to fall. Her infant
 Babe
 Had from its mother caught the trick of
 grief, 830
 And sighed among its playthings. I
 withdrew,
 And once again entering the garden saw,
 More plainly still, that poverty and grief
 Were now come nearer to her: weeds
 defaced
 The hardened soil, and knots of withered
 grass: 835
 No ridges there appeared of clear black
 mould,
 No winter greenness; of her herbs and
 flowers,
 It seemed the better part were gnawed
 away
 Or trampled into earth; a chain of straw,
 Which had been twined about the slender
 stem 840
 Of a young apple-tree, lay at its root;
 The bark was nibbled round by truant
 sheep.
 —Margaret stood near, her infant in her
 arms,
 And, noting that my eye was on the tree,
 She said, "I fear it will be dead and gone
 Ere Robert come again." When to the
 House 846
 We had returned together, she enquired
 If I had any hope:—but for her babe
 And for her little orphan boy, she said,
 She had no wish to live, that she must
 die 850
 Of sorrow. Yet I saw the idle loom
 Still in its place; his Sunday garments
 hung
 Upon the self-same nail; his very staff
 Stood undisturbed behind the door.
 And when,
 In bleak December, I retraced this way,
 She told me that her little babe was dead,
 And she was left alone. She now, released
 From her maternal cares, had taken up

The employment common through these
 wilds, and gained,
 By spinning hemp, a pittance for herself;
 And for this end had hired a neighbour's
 boy 861
 To give her needful help. That very time
 Most willingly she put her work aside,
 And walked with me along the miry road,
 Heedless how far; and, in such piteous
 sort 865
 That any heart had ached to hear her,
 begged
 That, wheresoe'er I went, I still would ask
 For him whom she had lost. We parted
 then—
 Our final parting; for from that time forth
 Did many seasons pass ere I returned 870
 Into this tract again.
 Nine tedious years;
 From their first separation, nine long
 years,
 She lingered in unquiet widowhood;
 A Wife and Widow. Needs must it have
 been
 A sore heart-wasting! I have heard, my
 Friend, 875
 That in yon harbour oftentimes she sate
 Alone, through half the vacant sabbath
 day;
 And, if a dog passed by, she still would
 quit
 The shade, and look abroad. On this old
 bench 879
 For hours she sate; and evermore her eye
 Was busy in the distance, shaping things
 That made her heart beat quick. You see
 that path,
 Now faint,—the grass has crept o'er its
 grey line;
 There, to and fro, she paced through many
 a day
 Of the warm summer, from a belt of hemp
 That girt her waist, spinning the long-
 drawn thread 886
 With backward steps. Yet ever as there
 passed
 A man whose garments showed the sol-
 dier's red,
 Or crippled mendicant in sailor's garb,
 The little child who sate to turn the wheel
 Ceased from his task; and she with falter-
 ing voice 891
 Made many a fond enquiry; and when they,
 Whose presence gave no comfort, were
 gone by,
 Her heart was still more sad. And by yon
 gate,
 That bars the traveller's road, she often
 stood, 895
 And when a stranger horseman came, the
 latch
 Would lift, and in his face look wistfully:
 Most happy, if, from aught discovered
 there

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK I

Of tender feeling, she might dare repeat
The same sad question. Meanwhile her
poor Hut 900
Sank to decay; for he was gone, whose
hand,
At the first nipping of October frost,
Closed up each chink, and with fresh
bands of straw
Chequered the green-grown thatch. And
so she lived
Through the long winter, reckless and
alone; 905
Until her house by frost, and thaw, and
rain,
Was sapped; and while she slept, the
nightly damps
Did chill her breast; and in the stormy
day
Her tattered clothes were ruffled by the
wind,
Even at the side of her own fire. Yet
still 910
She loved this wretched spot, nor would
for worlds
Have parted hence; and still that length
of road,
And this rude bench, one torturing hope
endeared,
Fast rooted at her heart: and here, my
Friend,—
In sickness she remained; and here she
died; 915
Last human tenant of these ruined walls!’

The old Man ceased: he saw that I was
moved;
From that low bench, rising instinctively
I turned aside in weakness, nor had power
To thank him for the tale which he had
told. 920
I stood, and leaning o’er the garden wall
Reviewed that Woman’s sufferings; and
it seemed
To comfort me while with a brother’s love
I blessed her in the impotence of grief.
Then towards the cottage I returned; and
traced 925
Fondly, though with an interest more
mild,
That secret spirit of humanity
Which, ‘mid the calm oblivious tendencies
Of nature, ‘mid her plants, and weeds,
and flowers,
And silent overgrowings, still survived.
The old Man, noting this, resumed, and
said, 931
‘My Friend! enough to sorrow you have
given,

The purposes of wisdom ask no more:
Nor more would she have craved as due
to One
Who, in her worst distress, had oft-times
felt 935
The unbounded might of prayer; and
learned, with soul
Fixed on the Cross, that consolation
springs,
From sources deeper far than deepest
pain,
For the meek Sufferer. Why then should
we read
The forms of things with an unworthy
eye? 940
She sleeps in the calm earth, and peace is
here.
I well remember that those very plumes,
Those weeds, and the high spear-grass on
that wall,
By mist and silent rain-drops silvered o’er,
As once I passed, into my heart conveyed
So still an image of tranquillity, 946
So calm and still, and looked so beautiful
Amid the uneasy thoughts which filled
my mind,
That what we feel of sorrow and despair
From ruin and from change, and all the
grief 950
That passing shows of Being leave behind,
Appeared an idle dream, that could main-
tain,
Nowhere, dominion o’er the enlightened
spirit
Whose meditative sympathies repose
Upon the breast of Faith. I turned
away, 955
And walked along my road in happiness.’

He ceased. Ere long the sun declining
shot
A slant and mellow radiance, which began
To fall upon us, while, beneath the trees,
We sate on that low bench: and now we
felt, 960
Admonished thus, the sweet hour coming
on.
A linnet warbled from those lofty elms,
A thrush sang loud, and other melodies,
At distance heard, peopled the milder air.
The old Man rose, and, with a sprightly
mien 965
Of hopeful preparation, grasped his staff;
Together casting then a farewell look
Upon those silent walls, we left the shade;
And, ere the stars were visible, had
reached 969
A village-inn,—our evening resting-place.

BOOK SECOND

THE SOLITARY

ARGUMENT

The Author describes his travels with the Wanderer, whose character is further illustrated.—Morning scene, and view of a Village Wake.—Wanderer's account of a Friend whom he purposes to visit.—View, from an eminence, of the Valley which his Friend had chosen for his retreat.—Sound of singing from below.—A funeral procession.—Descent into the Valley.—Observations drawn from the Wanderer at sight of a book accidentally discovered in a recess in the Valley.—Meeting with the Wanderer's friend, the Solitary.—Wanderer's description of the mode of burial in this mountainous district.—Solitary contrasts with this, that of the individual carried a few minutes before from the cottage.—The cottage entered.—Description of the Solitary's apartment.—Repast there.—View, from the window, of two mountain summits; and the Solitary's description of the companionship they afford him.—Account of the departed inmate of the cottage.—Description of a grand spectacle upon the mountains, with its effect upon the Solitary's mind.—Leave the house.

In days of yore how fortunately fared
The Minstrel! wandering on from hall to
hall,
Baronial court or royal; cheered with
gifts
Munificent, and love, and ladies' praise;
Now meeting on his road an armed
knight,
Now resting with a pilgrim by the side
Of a clear brook;—beneath an abbey's
roof
One evening sumptuously lodged; the
next,
Humbly in a religious hospital;
Or with some merry outlaws of the wood;
Or haply shrouded in a hermit's cell. 11
Him, sleeping or awake, the robber
spared;
He walked—protected from the sword of
war
By virtue of that sacred instrument
His harp, suspended at the traveller's
side; 15
His dear companion wheresoe'er he went
Opening from land to land an easy way
By melody, and by the charm of verse.
Yet not the noblest of that honoured Race
Drew happier, loftier, more empasioned,
thoughts 20
From his long journeyings and eventful
life,
Than this obscure Itinerant had skill
To gather, ranging through the tamer
ground
Of these our unimaginative days;
Both while he trod the earth in humblest
guise 25
Accounted with his burthen and his staff;
And now, when free to move with lighter
pace.

What wonder, then, if I, whose favourite
school
Hath been the fields, the roads, and rural
lanes,
Looked on this guide with reverential
love? 30

Each with the other pleased, we now
pursued
Our journey, under favourable skies.
Turn wheresoe'er we would, he was a
light
Unfailing; not a hamlet could we pass,
Rarely a house, that did not yield to him
Remembrances; or from his tongue call
forth 36
Some way-beguiling tale. Nor less regard
Accompanied those strains of apt dis-
course,
Which nature's various objects might
inspire;
And in the silence of his face I read 40
His overflowing spirit. Birds and beasts,
And the mute fish that glances in the
stream,
And harmless reptile coiling in the sun,
And gorgeous insect hovering in the air,
The fowl domestic, and the household
dog— 45
In his capacious mind, he loved them all:
Their rights acknowledging he felt for all.
Oft was occasion given me to perceive
How the calm pleasures of the pasturing
herd
To happy contemplation soothed his
walk; 50
How the poor brute's condition, forced to
run
Its course of suffering in the public road,
Sad contrast! all too often smote his heart
With unavailing pity. Rich in love
And sweet humanity, he was, himself, 55
To the degree that he desired, beloved.
Smiles of good-will from faces that he
knew
Greeted us all day long; we took our seats
By many a cottage-hearth, where he
received
The welcome of an Inmate from afar, 60
And I at once forgot I was a Stranger.
—Nor was he loth to enter ragged huts,
Huts where his charity was blest; his voice
Heard as the voice of an experienced
friend.

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK II

And, sometimes—where the poor man
held dispute 65

With his own mind, unable to subdue
Impatience through inaptness to perceive
General distress in his particular lot;
Or cherishing resentment, or in vain
Struggling against it; with a soul per-
plexed, 70

And finding in herself no steady power
To draw the line of comfort that divides
Calamity, the chastisement of Heaven,
From the injustice of our brother men—
To him appeal was made as to a judge;
Who, with an understanding heart, al-
layed 76

The perturbation; listened to the plea;
Resolved the dubious point; and sentence
gave

So grounded, so applied, that it was heard
With softened spirit, even when it con-
demned. 80

Such intercourse I witnessed, while we
roved,

Now as his choice directed, now as mine;
Or both, with equal readiness of will,
Our course submitting to the changeful
breeze

Of accident. But when the rising sun 85
Had three times called us to renew our
walk,

My Fellow-traveller, with earnest voice,
As if the thought were but a moment old,
Claimed absolute dominion for the day.
We started—and he led me toward the
hills, 90

Up through an ample vale, with higher
hills

Before us, mountains stern and desolate;
But, in the majesty of distance, now
Set off, and to our ken appearing fair
Of aspect, with aerial softness clad, 95
And beautified with morning's purple
beams.

The wealthy, the luxurious, by the stress
Of business roused, or pleasure, ere their
time,

May roll in chariots, or provoke the hoofs
Of the fleet coursers they bestride, to raise
From earth the dust of morning, slow to
rise; 101

And they, if blest with health and hearts
at ease,
Shall lack not their enjoyment:—but how
faint

Compared with ours! who, pacing side
by side,

Could, with an eye of leisure, look on all
That we beheld; and lend the listening
sense 106

To every grateful sound of earth and air;
Pausing at will—our spirits braced, our
thoughts

Pleasant as roses in the thickets blown,
And pure as dew bathing their crimson
leaves. 110

Mount slowly, sun! that we may journey
long,

By this dark hill protected from thy
beams!

Such is the summer pilgrim's frequent
wish;

But quickly from among our morning
thoughts

'Twas chased away: for, toward the
western side 115

Of the broad vale, casting a casual glance,
We saw a throng of people;—wherefore
met?

Blithe notes of music, suddenly let loose
On the thrilled ear, and flags uprising,
yield

Prompt answer; they proclaim the annual
Wake, 120

Which the bright season favours.—Tabor
and pipe

In purpose join to hasten or reprove
The laggard Rustic; and repay with boons

Of merriment a party-coloured knot, 124
Already formed upon the village-green.

—Beyond the limits of the shadow cast
By the broad hill, glistened upon our
sight

That gay assemblage. Round them and
above,

Glitter, with dark recesses interposed,
Casement, and cottage-roof, and stems of
trees 130

Half-veiled in vapoury cloud, the silver
steam

Of dews fast melting on their leafy boughs
By the strong sunbeams smitten. Like
a mast

Of gold, the Maypole shines; as if the
rays

Of morning, aided by exhaling dew, 135
With gladsome influence could re-animate

The faded garlands dangling from its
sides.

Said I, 'The music and the sprightly
scene

Invite us; shall we quit our road, and join
These festive matins?'—He replied, 'Not
loth 140

To linger I would here with you partake,
Not one hour merely, but till evening's
close,

The simple pastimes of the day and place.
By the fleet Racers, ere the sun be set,

The turf of yon large pasture will be
skimmed; 145

There, too, the lusty Wrestlers shall con-
tend:

But know we not that he, who intermits
The appointed task and duties of the day,

Untunes full oft the pleasures of the day;

Checking the finer spirits that refuse 150
To flow, when purposes are lightly changed?

A length of journey yet remains untraced:
Let us proceed.' Then, pointing with his staff

Raised toward those craggy summits, his intent

He thus imparted:—

'In a spot that lies 155
Among yon mountain fastnesses concealed,

You will receive, before the hour of noon,
Good recompense, I hope, for this day's toil,

From sight of One who lives secluded there,

Lonesome and lost: of whom, and whose past life, 160

(Not to forestall such knowledge as may be

More faithfully collected from himself)

This brief communication shall suffice.

'Though now sojourning there, he, like myself, 164

Sprung from a stock of lowly parentage
Among the wilds of Scotland, in a tract
Where many a sheltered and well-tended plant

Bears, on the humblest ground of social life,

Blossoms of piety and innocence.

Such grateful promises his youth displayed: 170

And, having shown in study forward zeal,

He to the Ministry was duly called;

And straight, incited by a curious mind
Filled with vague hopes, he undertook the charge

Of Chaplain to a military troop 175
Cheered by the Highland bagpipe, as they marched

In plaided vest,—his fellow-countrymen.

This office filling, yet by native power
And force of native inclination made

An intellectual ruler in the haunts 180
Of social vanity, he walked the world,

Gay, and affecting graceful gaiety;

Lax, buoyant—less a pastor with his flock
Than a soldier among soldiers—lived and roamed

Where Fortune led:—and Fortune, who off proves 185

The careless wanderer's friend, to him made known

A blooming Lady—a conspicuous flower,
Admired for beauty, for her sweetness praised;

Whom he had sensibility to love,
Ambition to attempt, and skill to win. 190

'For this fair Bride, most rich in gifts of mind,

Nor sparingly endowed with worldly wealth,

His office he relinquished; and retired
From the world's notice to a rural home.

Youth's season yet with him was scarcely past, 195

And she was in youth's prime. How free their love,

How full their joy! Till, pitiable doom!
In the short course of one undreaded year,

Death blasted all. Death suddenly o'er-threw

Two lovely Children—all that they possessed! 200

The Mother followed:—miserably bare
The one Survivor stood; he wept, he prayed

For his dismissal, day and night, compelled

To hold communion with the grave, and face

With pain the regions of eternity. 205

An uncomplaining apathy displaced
This anguish; and, indifferent to delight,

To aim and purpose, he consumed his days,

To private interest dead, and public care.
So lived he; so he might have died.

But now,
To the wide world's astonishment, ap-
peared 211

A glorious opening, the unlooked-for dawn,

That promised everlasting joy to France!
Her voice of social transport reached even him!

He broke from his contracted bounds, repaired 215

To the great City, an emporium then
Of golden expectations, and receiving

Freights every day from a new world of hope.

Thither his popular talents he transferred;
And, from the pulpit, zealously main-
tained 220

The cause of Christ and civil liberty,
As one, and moving to one glorious end.

Intoxicating service! I might say
A happy service; for he was sincere

As vanity and fondness for applause, 225
And new and shapeless wishes, would allow.

'That righteous cause (such power hath freedom) bound,

For one hostility, in friendly league,
Ethereal natures and the worst of slaves;

Was served by rival advocates that came
From regions opposite as heaven and hell.

One courage seemed to animate them all:
And, from the dazzling conquests daily gained

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK II]

By their united efforts, there arose
A proud and most presumptuous confidence 235

In the transcendent wisdom of the age,
And her discernment; not alone in rights,
And in the origin and bounds of power
Social and temporal; but in laws divine,
Deduced by reason, or to faith revealed.
An overweening trust was raised; and
fear 241

Cast out, alike of person and of thing.
Plague from this union spread, whose
subtle bane

The strongest did not easily escape;
And He, what wonder! took a mortal
taint. 245

How shall I trace the change, how bear
to tell

That he broke faith with them whom he
had laid

In earth's dark chambers, with a Chris-
tian's hope!

An infidel contempt of holy writ
Stole by degrees upon his mind; and
hence 250

Life, like that Roman Janus, double-
faced;

Vilest hypocrisy—the laughing, gay
Hypocrisy, not leagued with fear, but
pride.

Smooth words he had to wheedle simple
souls;

But, for disciples of the inner school, 255
Old freedom was old servitude, and they
The wisest whose opinions stooped the
least

To known restraints; and who most
boldly drew

Hopeful prognostications from a creed,
That, in the light of false philosophy, 260

Spread like a halo round a misty moon,
Widening its circle as the storms advance.

'His sacred function was at length
renounced;

And every day and every place enjoyed
The unshackled layman's natural liberty;
Speech, manners, morals, all without dis-
guise. 266

I do not wish to wrong him; though the
course

Of private life licentiously displayed
Unhallowed actions—planted like a
crown

Upon the insolent aspiring brow 270

Of spurious notions—worn as open signs
Of prejudice subdued—still he retained,

'Mid much abasement, what he had
received

From nature, an intense and glowing
mind.

Wherefore, when humbled Liberty grew
weak, 275

And mortal sickness on her face appeared,

He coloured objects to his own desire
As with a lover's passion. Yet his moods
Of pain were keen as those of better men,
Nay keener, as his fortitude was less: 280
And he continued, when worse days were
come,

To deal about his sparkling eloquence,
Struggling against the strange reverse
with zeal

That showed like happiness. But, in
despite

Of all this outside bravery, within, 285
He neither felt encouragement nor hope;

For moral dignity, and strength of mind,
Were wanting; and simplicity of life;

And reverence for himself; and, last and
best,

Confiding thoughts, through love and fear
of Him 290

Before whose sight the troubles of this
world

Are vain, as billows in a tossing sea.

'The glory of the times fading away—
The splendour, which had given a festal
air

To self-importance, hallowed it, and
veiled 295

From his own sight—this gone, he for-
feited

All joy in human nature; was consumed,
And vexed, and chafed, by levity and
scorn,

And fruitless indignation; galled by pride;
Made desperate by contempt of men who
throve 300

Before his sight in power or fame, and
won,

Without desert, what he desired; weak
men,

Too weak even for his envy or his hate!
Tormented thus, after a wandering course
Of discontent, and inwardly oppress 305

With malady—in part, I fear, provoked
By weariness of life—he fixed his home,

Or, rather say, sate down by very chance,
Among these rugged hills; where now he
dwells,

And wastes the sad remainder of his
hours, 310

Steeped in a self-indulging spleen, that
wants not

Its own voluptuousness;—on this re-
solved,

With this content, that he will live and
die

Forgotten,—at safe distance from "a
world

Not moving to his mind."

These serious words
Closed the preparatory notices 316

That served my Fellow-traveller to beguile
The way, while we advanced up that wide
vale.

Diverging now (as if his quest had been
Some secret of the mountains, cavern,
fall 320

Of water, or some lofty eminence,
Renowned for splendid prospect far and
wide)

We scaled, without a track to ease our
steps,

A steep ascent; and reached a dreary
plain,

With a tumultuous waste of huge hill
tops 325

Before us; savage region! which I paced
Dispirited: when, all at once, behold!

Beneath our feet, a little lowly vale,
A lowly vale, and yet uplifted high

Among the mountains; even as if the
spot 330

Had been from eldest time by wish of
theirs

So placed, to be shut out from all the
world!

Urn-like it was in shape, deep as an urn;
With rocks encompassed, save that to the
south

Was one small opening, where a heath-
clad ridge 335

Supplied a boundary less abrupt and
close;

A quiet treeless nook, with two green
fields,

A liquid pool that glittered in the sun,
And one bare dwelling; one abode, no
more!

It seemed the home of poverty and toil,
Though not of want: the little fields, made
green 341

By husbandry of many thrifty years,
Paid cheerful tribute to the moorland
house.

—There crows the cock, single in his
domain:

The small birds find in spring no thicket
there 345

To shroud them; only from the neighbour-
ing vales

The cuckoo, straggling up to the hill tops,
Shouteth faint tidings of some gladder
place.

Ah! what a sweet Recess, thought I,
is here!

Instantly throwing down my limbs at
ease 350

Upon a bed of heath;—full many a spot
Of hidden beauty have I chanced to espy

Among the mountains; never one like
this;

So lonesome, and so perfectly secure;
Not melancholy—no, for it is green, 355

And bright, and fertile, furnished in itself
With the few needful things that life
requires.

—In rugged arms how softly does it lie,

How tenderly protected! Far and near
We have an image of the pristine earth,
The planet in its nakedness: were this 361
Man's only dwelling, sole appointed seat,
First, last, and single, in the breathing
world,

It could not be more quiet: peace is here
Or nowhere; days unruffled by the gale

Of public news or private; years that
pass 366

Forgetfully; uncalled upon to pay
The common penalties of mortal life,

Sickness, or accident, or grief, or pain.

On these and kindred thoughts intent
I lay 370

In silence musing by my Comrade's side,
He also silent; when from out the heart

Of that profound abyss a solemn voice,
Or several voices in one solemn sound,

Was heard ascending; mournful, deep,
and slow 375

The cadence, as of psalms—a funeral
dirge!

We listened, looking down upon the hut,
But seeing no one: meanwhile from be-
low

The strain continued, spiritual as before;
And now distinctly could I recognise 380

These words:—*'Shall in the grave thy love
be known,*

In death thy faithfulness?'—*'God rest his
soul!'*

Said the old man, abruptly breaking
silence,—

'He is departed, and finds peace at last!'

This scarcely spoken, and those holy
strains 385

Not ceasing, forth appeared in view a
band

Of rustic persons, from behind the hut
Bearing a coffin in the midst, with which

They shaped their course along the sloping
side

Of that small valley, singing as they
moved; 390

A sober company and few, the men
Bare-headed, and all decently attired!

Some steps when they had thus advanced,
the dirge

Ended; and, from the stillness that ensued
Recovering, to my Friend I said, *'You*

spake, 395
Methought, with apprehension that *these*
rites

Are paid to Him upon whose shy retreat
This day we purposed to intrude."

'I did so,

But let us hence, that we may learn the
truth: *

Perhaps it is not he but some one else 400
For whom this pious service is performed;
Some other tenant of the solitude.'

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK II

So, to a steep and difficult descent
 Trusting ourselves, we wound from crag
 to crag,
 Where passage could be won; and, as the
 last 405
 Of the mute train, behind the heathy top
 Of that off-sloping outlet, disappeared,
 I, more impatient in my downward
 course,
 Had landed upon easy ground; and there
 Stood waiting for my Comrade. When
 behold 410
 An object that enticed my steps aside!
 A narrow, winding, entry opened out
 Into a platform—that lay, sheepfold-wise,
 Enclosed between an upright mass of rock
 And one old moss-grown wall;—a cool
 recess, 415
 And fanciful! For where the rock and
 wall
 Met in an angle, hung a penthouse, framed
 By thrusting two rude staves into the wall
 And overlaying them with mountain sods;
 To weather-fend a little turf-built seat 420
 Whereon a full-grown man might rest,
 nor dread
 The burning sunshine, or a transient
 shower;
 But the whole plainly wrought by chil-
 dren's hands!
 Whose skill had thronged the floor with
 a proud show
 Of baby-houses, curiously arranged; 425
 Nor wanting ornament of walks between,
 With mimic trees inserted in the turf,
 And gardens interposed. Pleased with
 the sight,
 I could not choose but beckon to my
 Guide,
 Who, entering, round him threw a careless
 glance 430
 Impatient to pass on, when I exclaimed,
 'Lo! what is here?' and, stooping down,
 drew forth
 A book, that, in the midst of stones and
 moss
 And wreck of party-coloured earthenware,
 Aptly disposed, had lent its help to raise
 One of those petty structures. 'His it
 must be!' 436
 Exclaimed the Wanderer, 'cannot but be
 his,
 And he is gone!' The book, which in my
 hand
 Had opened of itself (for it was swoln
 With searching damp, and seemingly had
 lain 440
 To the injurious elements exposed
 From week to week,) I found to be a work
 In the French tongue, a Novel of Voltaire,
 His famous Optimist. 'Unhappy Man!'
 Exclaimed my Friend: 'here then has
 been to him 445
 Retreat within retreat, a sheltering-place

Within how deep a shelter! He had fits,
 Even to the last, of genuine tenderness,
 And loved the haunts of children; here,
 no doubt,
 Pleasing and pleased, he shared their
 simple sports, 450
 Or sate companionless; and here the book,
 Left and forgotten in his careless way,
 Must by the cottage-children have been
 found:
 Heaven bless them, and their inconsiderate
 work!
 To what odd purpose have the darlings
 turned 455
 This sad memorial of their hapless friend!'

'Me,' said I, 'most doth it surprise,
 to find
 Such book in such a place!'—'A book it
 is,'
 He answered, 'to the Person suited well,
 Though little suited to surrounding
 things: 460
 'Tis strange, I grant; and stranger still had
 been
 To see the Man who owned it, dwelling
 here,
 With one poor shepherd, far from all the
 world!—
 Now, if our errand hath been thrown
 away, 464
 As from these intimations I forebode,
 Grieved shall I be—less for my sake than
 yours,
 And least of all for him who is no more.'

By this, the book was in the old Man's
 hand;
 And he continued, glancing on the leaves
 An eye of scorn:—'The lover,' said he,
 'doomed 470
 To love when hope hath failed him—
 whom no depth
 Of privacy is deep enough to hide,
 Hath yet his bracelet or his lock of hair,
 And that is joy to him. When change of
 times
 Hath summoned kings to scaffolds, do
 but give 475
 The faithful servant, who must hide his
 head
 Henceforth in whatsoever nook he may,
 A kerchief sprinkled with his master's
 blood,
 And he too hath his comforter. How
 poor,
 Beyond all poverty how destitute, 480
 Must that Man have been left, who, hither
 driven,
 Flying or seeking, could yet bring with
 him
 No dearer relique, and no better stay,
 Than this dull product of a scoffer's pen,
 Impure conceits discharging from a heart

Hardened by impious pride!—I did not
fear ⁴⁸⁶
To tax you with this journey;—mildly
said
My venerable Friend, as forth we stepped
Into the presence of the cheerful light—
'For I have knowledge that you do not
shrink ⁴⁹⁰
From moving spectacles;—but let us on.'

So speaking, on he went, and at the word
I followed, till he made a sudden stand:
For full in view, approaching through a
gate

That opened from the enclosure of green
fields ⁴⁹⁵
Into the rough uncultivated ground,
Behold the Man whom he had fancied
dead!

I knew from his deportment, mien, and
dress,

That it could be no other; a pale face,
A meagre person, tall, and in a garb ⁵⁰⁰
Not rustic—dull and faded like himself!
He saw us not, though distant but few
steps;

For he was busy, dealing, from a store
Upon a broad leaf carried, choicest strings
Of red ripe currants; gift by which he
strove, ⁵⁰⁵

With intermixture of endearing words,
To soothe a Child, who walked beside
him, weeping

As if disconsolate.—'They to the grave
Are bearing him, my Little-one,' he said,
'To the dark pit; but he will feel no pain;
His body is at rest, his soul in heaven.' ⁵¹¹

More might have followed—but my
honoured Friend

Broke in upon the Speaker with a frank
And cordial greeting.—Vivid was the
light

That flashed and sparkled from the other's
eyes; ⁵¹⁵

He was all fire: no shadow on his brow
Remained, nor sign of sickness on his face.
Hands joined he with his Visitant,—a
grasp,

An eager grasp; and many moments'
space—

When the first glow of pleasure was no
more. ⁵²⁰

And, of the sad appearance which at once
Had vanished, much was come and com-
ing back—

An amicable smile retained the life
Which it had unexpectedly received,
Upon his hollow cheek. 'How kind,' he
said, ⁵²⁵

'Nor could your coming have been better
timed;

For this, you see, is in our narrow world
A day of sorrow. I have here a charge—

And, speaking thus, he patted tenderly
The sun-burnt forehead of the weeping
child— ⁵³⁰

'A little mourner, whom it is my task
To comfort;—but how came ye?—if you
track

(Which doth at once befriend us and
betray)

Conducted hither your most welcome feet,
Ye could not miss the funeral train—they
yet ⁵³⁵

Have scarcely disappeared.' 'This bloom-
ing Child,'

Said the old Man, 'is of an age to weep
At any grave or solemn spectacle,

Inly distressed or overpowered with awe,
He knows not wherefore;—but the boy
to-day, ⁵⁴⁰

Perhaps is shedding orphan's tears; you
also

Must have sustained a loss.'—'The hand
of Death,'

He answered, 'has been here; but could
not well

Have fallen more lightly, if it had not
fallen

Upon myself.—The other left these
words ⁵⁴⁵

Unnoticed, thus continuing.—
'From yon crag

Down whose steep sides we dropped into
the vale,

We heard the hymn they sang—a solemn
sound

Heard anywhere; but in a place like this
'Tis more than human! Many precious
rites ⁵⁵⁰

And customs of our rural ancestry
Are gone, or stealing from us; this, I
hope,

Will last for ever. Oft on my way have I
Stood still, though but a casual passenger,
So much I felt the awfulness of life, ⁵⁵⁵

In that one moment when the corse is
lifted

In silence, with a hush of decency;
Then from the threshold moves with song
of peace,

And confidential yearnings, tow'rd's its
home,

Its final home on earth. What traveller—
who— ⁵⁶⁰

(How far soe'er a stranger) does not own
The bond of brotherhood, when he sees
them go,

A mute procession on the houseless road;
Or passing by some single tenement
Or clustered dwellings, where again they
raise ⁵⁶⁵

The monitory voice? But most of all
It touches, it confirms, and elevates,

Then, when the body, soon to be con-
signed

Ashes to ashes, dust bequeathed to dust,

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK II

Is raised from the church-aisle, and forward borne 570

Upon the shoulders of the next in love,
The nearest in affection or in blood;

Yea, by the very mourners who had knelt
Beside the coffin, resting on its lid

In silent grief their unuplifted heads, 575
And heard meanwhile the Psalmist's

mournful plaint,
And that most awful scripture which

declares
We shall not sleep, but we shall all be

changed!
—Have I not seen—ye likewise may have

seen—
Son, husband, brothers—brothers side by

side, 580
And son and father also side by side,

Rise from that posture:—and in concert
move

On the green turf following the vested
Priest,

Four dear supporters of one senseless
weight,

From which they do not shrink, and under
which 585

They faint not, but advance towards the
open grave

Step after step—together, with their firm
Unhidden faces: he that suffers most,

He outwardly, and inwardly perhaps,
The most serene, with most undaunted

eye!— 590
Oh! blest are they who live and die like

these,
Loved with such love, and with such sor-

row mourned!'

'That poor Man taken hence to-day,'
replied

The Solitary, with a faint sarcastic smile
Which did not please me, 'must be

deemed, I fear, 595
Of the unblest; for he will surely sink

Into his mother earth without such pomp
Of grief, depart without occasion given

By him for such array of fortitude.
Full seventy winters hath he lived, and

mark! 600
This simple Child will mourn his one short

hour,
And I shall miss him; scanty tribute! yet,

This wanting, he would leave the sight of
men,

If love were his sole claim upon their care,
Like a ripe date which in the desert falls

Without a hand to gather it.'

At this 606
I interposed, though loth to speak, and

said,
'Can it be thus among so small a band

As ye must needs be here? in such a place
I would not willingly, methinks, lose

sight 610

Of a departing cloud.'—'Twas not for
love'—

Answered the sick Man with a careless
voice—

'That I came hither; neither have I found
Among associates who have power of

speech,
Nor in such other converse as is here, 615

Temptation so prevailing as to change
That mood, or undermine my first re-

solve.
Then, speaking in like careless sort, he

said
To my benign Companion,—'Pity 'tis

That fortune did not guide you to this
house 620

A few days earlier; then would you have
seen

What stuff the Dwellers in a solitude,
That seems by Nature hollowed out to be

The seat and bosom of pure innocence,
Are made of; an ungracious matter this!

Which, for truth's sake, yet in remem-
brance too 626

Of past discussions with this zealous
friend

And advocate of humble life, I now
Will force upon his notice; undeterred

By the example of his own pure course,
And that respect and deference which a

soul 631
May fairly claim, by niggard age enriched

In what she most doth value, love of God
And his frail creature Man;—but ye

shall hear.
I talk—and ye are standing in the sun 635

Without refreshment!'

Quickly had he spoken.
And, with light steps still quicker than

his words,
Led toward the Cottage. Homely was

the spot;
And, to my feeling, ere we reached the

door,
Had almost a forbidding nakedness; 640

Less fair, I grant, even painfully less fair,
Than it appeared when from the beetling

rock
We had looked down upon it. All within,

As left by the departed company,
Was silent; save the solitary clock 645

That on mine ear ticked with a mournful
sound.—

Following our Guide, we clomb the
cottage-stairs

And reached a small apartment dark and
low,

Which was no sooner entered than our
Host

Said gaily, 'This is my domain, my cell,
My hermitage, my cabin, what you will—

I love it better than a snail his house.
But now ye shall be feasted with our

best.'

So, with more ardour than an unripe
 girl
 Left one day mistress of her mother's
 stores, 655
 He went about his hospitable task.
 My eyes were busy, and my thoughts no
 less,
 And pleased I looked upon my grey-
 haired Friend,
 As if to thank him; he returned that look,
 Cheered, plainly, and yet serious. What
 a wreck 660
 Had we about us! scattered was the floor,
 And, in like sort, chair, window-seat,
 and shelf,
 With books, maps, fossils, withered
 plants and flowers,
 And tufts of mountain moss. Mechanic
 tools
 Lay intermixed with scraps of paper,
 some 665
 Scribbled with verse: a broken angling-
 rod
 And shattered telescope, together linked
 By cobwebs, stood within a dusty nook;
 And instruments of music, some half-
 made,
 Some in disgrace, hung dangling from
 the walls. 670
 But speedily the promise was fulfilled;
 A feast before us, and a courteous Host
 Inviting us in glee to sit and eat.
 A napkin, white as foam of that rough
 brook
 By which it had been bleached, o'erspread
 the board; 675
 And was itself half-covered with a store
 Of dainties,—oaten bread, curd, cheese,
 and cream;
 And cakes of butter curiously embossed,
 Butter that had imbibed from meadow-
 flowers
 A golden hue, delicate as their own 680
 Faintly reflected in a lingering stream.
 Nor lacked, for more delight on that
 warm day,
 Our table, small parade of garden fruits,
 And whortle-berries from the mountain
 side.
 The Child, who long ere this had stilled
 his sobs, 685
 Was now a help to his late comforter,
 And moved, a willing Page, as he was bid,
 Ministering to our need.

In genial mood,
 While at our pastoral banquet thus we sat
 Fronting the window of that little cell,
 I could not, ever and anon, forbear 691
 To glance an upward look on two huge
 Peaks,
 That from some other vale peered into
 this.
 'Those lusty twins,' exclaimed our host,
 'if here

It were your lot to dwell, would soon
 become 695
 Your prized companions.—Many are the
 notes
 Which, in his tuneful course, the wind
 draws forth
 From rocks, woods, caverns, heaths, and
 dashing shores;
 And well those lofty brethren bear their
 part
 In the wild concert—chiefly when the
 storm 700
 Rides high; then all the upper air they
 fill
 With roaring sound, that ceases not to
 flow,
 Like smoke, along the level of the blast,
 In mighty current; theirs, too, is the song
 Of stream and headlong flood that seldom
 fails; 705
 And, in the grim and breathless hour of
 noon,
 Methinks that I have heard them echo
 back
 The thunder's greeting. Nor have nature's
 laws
 Left them ungifted with a power to yield
 Music of finer tone; a harmony, 710
 So do I call it, though it be the hand
 Of silence, though there be no voice;—
 the clouds,
 The mist, the shadows, light of golden
 suns,
 Motions of moonlight, all come thither—
 touch,
 And have an answer—thither come, and
 shape 715
 A language not unwelcome to sick hearts
 And idle spirits:—there the sun himself,
 At the calm close of summer's longest day,
 Rests his substantial orb;—between those
 heights
 And on the top of either pinnacle, 720
 More keenly than elsewhere in night's
 blue vault,
 Sparkle the stars, as of their station proud.
 Thoughts are not busier in the mind of
 man
 Than the mute agents stirring there:—
 alone
 Here do I sit and watch.—'

A fall of voice, 725
 Regretted like the nightingale's last note,
 Had scarcely closed this high-wrought
 strain of rapture
 Ere with inviting smile the Wanderer
 said:
 'Now for the tale with which you threat-
 ened us!'
 'In truth the threat escaped me unawares:
 Should the tale tire you, let this challenge
 stand 731
 For my excuse. Dissevered from man-
 kind,

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK II]

As to your eyes and thoughts we must
have seemed

When ye looked down upon us from the
crag,

Islanders' mid a stormy mountain sea, 735

We are not so;—perpetually we touch

Upon the vulgar ordinances of the world;

And he, whom this our cottage hath to-
day

Relinquished, lived dependent for his
bread

Upon the laws of public charity. 740

The Housewife, tempted by such slender
gains

As might from that occasion be distilled,

Opened, as she before had done for me,

Her doors to admit this homeless Pen-
sioner;

The portion gave of coarse but whole-
some fare 745

Which appetite required—a blind dull
nook,

Such as she had, the *kennel* of his rest!

This, in itself not ill, would yet have been

Ill borne in earlier life; but his was now

The still contentedness of seventy years.

Calm did he sit under the wide-spread
tree 751

Of his old age; and yet less calm and meek,

Winningly meek or venerably calm,

Than slow and torpid; paying in this
wise

A penalty, if penalty it were, 755

For spendthrift feats, excesses of his
prime.

I loved the old Man, for I pitied him!

A task it was, I own, to hold discourse

With one so slow in gathering up his
thoughts,

But he was a cheap pleasure to my eyes;

Mild, inoffensive, ready in *his* way, 761

And helpful to his utmost power: and
there

Our housewife knew full well what she
possessed!

He was her vassal of all labour, tilled

Her garden, from the pasture fetched her
kine; 765

And, one among the orderly array

Of hay-makers, beneath the burning sun

Maintained his place; or heedfully pur-
sued

His course, on errands bound, to other
vales,

Leading sometimes an inexperienced child

Too young for any profitable task. 771

So moved he like a shadow that per-
formed

Substantial service. Mark me now, and
learn

For what reward!—The moon her
monthly round

Hath not completed since our dame, the
queen 775

Of this one cottage and this lonely dale,
Into my little sanctuary rushed—

Voice to a rueful treble humanised,

And features in deplorable dismay.

I treat the matter lightly, but, alas! 780

It is most serious: persevering rain

Had fallen in torrents; all the mountain-
tops

Were hidden, and black vapours coursed
their sides;

This had I seen, and saw; but, till she
spoke,

Was wholly ignorant that my ancient
Friend— 785

Who at her bidding early and alone,

Had clomb aloft to delve the moorland
turf

For winter fuel—to his noontide meal

Returned not, and now, haply, on the
heights

Lay at the mercy of this raging storm.

'Inhuman!'—said I, 'was an old Man's
life 791

Not worth the trouble of a thought?—
alas!

This notice comes too late.' With joy I
saw

Her husband enter—from a distant vale.

We sallied forth together; found the
tools 795

Which the neglected veteran had dropped,

But through all quarters looked for him
in vain.

We shouted—but no answer! Darkness
fell

Without remission of the blast or shower,

And fears for our own safety drove us
home. 800

'I, who weep little, did, I will confess,

The moment I was seated here alone,

Honour my little cell with some few tears

Which anger and resentment could not
dry.

All night the storm endured: and, soon
as help 805

Had been collected from the neighbour-
ing vale,

With morning we renewed our quest:
the wind

Was fallen, the rain abated, but the hills

Lay shrouded in impenetrable mist;

And long and hopelessly we sought in
vain: 810

Till, chancing on that lofty ridge to pass

A heap of ruin—almost without walls

And wholly without roof (the bleached
remains

Of a small chapel, where, in ancient time,

The peasants of these lonely valleys used
To meet for worship on that central
height)— 816

We there espied the object of our search,
Lying full three parts buried among tufts

Of heath-plant, under and above him
strewn,

To baffle, as he might, the watery storm:
And there we found him breathing peace-
ably,

Snug as a child that hides itself in sport
'Mid a green hay-cock in a sunny field,
We spake—he made reply, but would not
stir

At our entreaty; less from want of power
Than apprehension and bewildering
thoughts.

'So was he lifted gently from the
ground,

And with their freight homeward the
shepherds moved

Through the dull mist, I following—when
a step,

A single step, that freed me from the
skirts

Of the blind vapour, opened to my view
Glory beyond all glory ever seen

By waking sense or by the dreaming soul!
The appearance, instantaneously dis-
closed,

Was of a mighty city—boldly say
A wilderness of building, sinking far

And self-withdrawn into a boundless
depth,

Far sinking into splendour—without end!
Fabric it seemed of diamond and of gold,

With alabaster domes, and silver spires,
And blazing terrace upon terrace, high

Uplifted; here, serene pavilions bright,
In avenues disposed; there, towers begirt

With battlements that on their restless
fronts

Bore stars—illumination of all gems!
By earthly nature had the effect been

wrought
Upon the dark materials of the storm

Now pacified; on them, and on the coves
And mountain-steeps and summits,

whereunto
The vapours had receded, taking there
Their station under a cerulean sky.

Oh, 'twas an unimaginable sight!
Clouds, mists, streams, watery rocks and

emerald turf,
Clouds of all tincture, rocks and sapphire

sky,
Confused, commingled, mutually in-
flamed,

Molten together, and composing thus,
Each lost in each, that marvellous array

Of temple, palace, citadel, and huge
Fantastic pomp of structure without

name,
In fleecy folds voluminous, enwrapped.

Right in the midst, where interspace
appeared

Of open court, an object like a throne
Under a shining canopy of state

Stood fixed; and fixed resemblances were
seen

To implements of ordinary use,
But vast in size, in substance glorified;

Such as by Hebrew Prophets were beheld
In vision—forms uncouth of mightiest

power
For admiration and mysterious awe.

This little Vale, a dwelling-place of Man,
Lay low beneath my feet; 'twas visible—

I saw not, but I felt that it was there.
That which I saw was the revealed abode

Of Spirits in beatitude: my heart
Swelled in my breast.—"I have been

dead," I cried,
"And now I live! Oh! wherefore do I

live?"
And with that pang I prayed to be no

more!
—But I forget our Charge, as utterly
I then forgot him:—there I stood and

gazed:
The apparition faded not away,
And I descended.

Having reached the house,
I found its rescued inmate safely lodged,

And in serene possession of himself,
Beside a fire whose genial warmth seemed

met
By a faint shining from the heart, a gleam
Of comfort, spread over his pallid face.

Great show of joy the housewife made,
and truly

Was glad to find her con-science set at
ease;

And not less glad, for sake of her good
name,

That the poor Sufferer had escaped with
life.

But, though he seemed at first to have
received

No harm, and uncomplaining as before
Went through his usual tasks, a silent

change
Soon showed itself: he lingered three

short weeks;
And from the cottage hath been borne

to-day.

'So ends my dolorous tale, and glad
I am

That it is ended.' At these words he
turned—

And, with blithe air of open fellowship,
Brought from the cupboard wine and

stouter cheer,
Like one who would be merry. Seeing

this,
My grey-haired Friend said courteously—

'Nay, nay,
You have regaled us as a hermit ought;

Now let us forth into the sun!—Our Host
Rose, though reluctantly, and forth we

went.

BOOK THIRD

DESPONDENCY

ARGUMENT

Images in the Valley.—Another Recess in it entered and described.—Wanderer's sensations.—Solitary's excited by the same objects.—Contrast between these.—Despondency of the Solitary gently reprov'd.—Conversation exhibiting the Solitary's past and present opinions and feelings, till he enters upon his own History at length.—His domestic felicity.—Afflictions.—Dejection.—Roused by the French Revolution.—Disappointment and disgust.—Voyage to America.—Disappointment and disgust pursue him.—His return.—His languor and depression of mind, from want of faith in the great truths of Religion, and want of confidence in the virtue of Mankind.

A HUMMING BEE—a little tinkling rill—
A pair of falcons wheeling on the wing,
In clamorous agitation, round the crest
Of a tall rock, their airy citadel—
By each and all of these the pensive ear 5
Was greeted, in the silence that ensued,
When through the cottage-threshold we
Had passed,
And, deep within that lonesome valley,
stood
Once more beneath the concave of a blue
And cloudless sky.—Anon exclaimed our
Host, 10
Triumphantly dispersing with the taunt
The shade of discontent which on his
brow
Had gathered,—‘Ye have left my cell,—
but see
How Nature hems you in with friendly
arms!
And by her help ye are my prisoners still.
But which way shall I lead you?—how
contrive, 16
In spot so parsimoniously endowed,
That the brief hours, which yet remain,
may reap
Some recompense of knowledge or de-
light?’
So saying, round he looked, as if per-
plexed; 20
And, to remove those doubts, my grey-
haired Friend
Said—‘Shall we take this pathway for
our guide?—
Upward it winds, as if, in summer heats,
Its line had first been fashioned by the
flock
Seeking a place of refuge at the root 25
Of yon black Yew-tree, whose protruded
boughs
Darken the silver bosom of the crag,
From which she draws her meagre sus-
tenance.
There in commodious shelter may we rest.
Or let us trace this streamlet to its source;
Feebly it tinkles with an earthy sound, 31
And a few steps may bring us to the spot
Where, haply, crowned with flowerets
and green herbs,
The mountain infant to the sun comes
forth,

Like human life from darkness.’—A quick
turn 35
Through a strait passage of encumbered
ground,
Proved that such hope was vain:—for now
we stood
Shut out from prospect of the open vale,
And saw the water, that composed this
rill,
Descending, disembodied, and diffused 40
O’er the smooth surface of an ample crag,
Lofty, and steep, and naked as a tower.
All further progress here was barred;—
And who,
Thought I, if master of a vacant hour,
Here would not linger, willingly de-
tained? 45
Whether to such wild objects he were led
When copious rains have magnified the
stream
Into a loud and white-robed waterfall,
Or introduced at this more quiet time. 49
Upon a semicirque of turf-clad ground,
The hidden nook discovered to our view
A mass of rock, resembling, as it lay
Right at the foot of that moist precipice,
A stranded ship, with keel upturned, that
rests
Fearless of winds and waves. Three
several stones 55
Stood near, of smaller size, and not unlike
To monumental pillars: and, from these
Some little space disjoined, a pair were
seen,
That with united shoulders bore aloft 59
A fragment, like an altar, flat and smooth:
Barren the tablet, yet thereon appeared
A tall and shining holly, that had found
A hospitable chink, and stood upright,
As if inserted by some human hand
In mockery, to wither in the sun, 65
Or lay its beauty flat before a breeze,
The first that entered. But no breeze
did now
Find entrance;—high or low appeared no
trace
Of motion, save the water that descended,
Diffused adown that barrier of steep rock,
And softly creeping, like a breath of
air, 71

Such as is sometimes seen, and hardly
seen,
To brush the still breast of a crystal lake.

'Behold a cabinet for sages built,
Which kings might envy!'—Praise to
this effect 75
Broke from the happy old Man's reverend
lip;

Who to the Solitary turned, and said,
'In sooth, with love's familiar privilege,
You have decried the wealth which is
your own.

Among these rocks and stones, methinks,
I see 80
More than the heedless impress that
belongs

To lonely nature's casual work: they bear
A semblance strange of power intelligent,
And of design not wholly worn away.
Boldest of plants that ever faced the
wind, 85

How gracefully that slender shrub looks
forth

From its fantastic birthplace! And I
own,

Some shadowy intimations haunt me
here,

That in these shows a chronicle survives
Of purposes akin to those of Man, 90
But wrought with mightier arm than now
prevails.

—Voiceless the stream descends into the
gulf

With timid lapse;—and lo! while in this
strait

I stand—the chasm of sky above my head
Is heaven's profoundest azure; no domain
For fickle, short-lived clouds to occupy,
Or to pass through; but rather an abyss
In which the everlasting stars abide;
And whose soft gloom, and boundless
depth, might tempt

The curious eye to look for them by day.
—Hail, Contemplation! from the stately
towers, 101

Reared by the industrious hand of human
art

To lift thee high above the misty air
And turbulence of murmuring cities vast;
From academic groves, that have for thee
Been planted, hither come and find a
lodge 106

To which thou may'st resort for holier
peace,—

From whose calm centre thou, through
height or depth,

May'st penetrate, wherever truth shall
lead;

Measuring through all degrees, until the
scale 110

Of time and conscious nature disappear,
Lost in unsearchable eternity!¹

¹ See Note, p. 127.

A pause ensued; and with minuter care
We scanned the various features of the
scene: 114

And soon the Tenant of that lonely vale
With courteous voice thus spake—

'I should have grieved
Hereafter, not escaping self-reproach,
If from my poor retirement ye had gone
Leaving this nook unvisited: but, in sooth,
Your unexpected presence had so roused
My spirits, that they were bent on enter-
prise; 121

And, like an ardent hunter, I forgot,
Or, shall I say?—disdained, the game that
lurks

At my own door. The shapes before our
eyes

And their arrangement, doubtless must
be deemed 125

The sport of Nature, aided by blind
Chance

Rudely to mock the works of toiling Man.
And hence, this upright shaft of unhewn
stone,

From Fancy, willing to set off her stores
By sounding titles, hath acquired the
name 130

Of Pompey's pillar; that I gravely style
My Theban obelisk; and, there, behold
A Druid cromlech!—thus I entertain
The antiquarian humour, and am pleased
To skim along the surfaces of things, 135
Beguiling harmlessly the listless hours.

But if the spirit be oppressed by sense
Of instability, revolt, decay,
And change, and emptiness, these freaks
of Nature

And her blind helper Chance, do *then*
suffice 140

To quicken, and to aggravate—to feed
Pity and scorn, and melancholy pride,
Not less than that huge Pile (from some
abyss

Of mortal power unquestionably sprung)
Whose hoary diadem of pendent rocks

Confines the shrill-voiced whirlwind
round and round 146

Eddying within its vast circumference,
On Sarum's naked plain—than pyramid

Of Egypt, unsubverted, undissolved—
Or Syria's marble ruins towering high 150

Above the sandy desert, in the light
Of sun or moon.—Forgive me, if I say

That an appearance which hath raised
your minds

To an exalted pitch (the self-same cause
Different effect producing) is for me

Fraught rather with depression than
delight, 156

Though shame it were, could I not look
around,

By the reflection of your pleasure, pleased.
Yet happier in my judgment, even than
you

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK III]

With your bright transports fairly may
be deemed, 160
The wandering Herbalist,—who, clear
alike
From vain, and, that worse evil, vexing
thoughts,
Casts, if he ever chance to enter here,
Upon these uncouth Forms a slight
regard
Of transitory interest, and peeps round
For some rare floweret of the hills, or
plant 166
Of craggy fountain; what he hopes for
wins,
Or learns, at least, that 'tis not to be won:
Then, keen and eager, as a fine-nosed
hound
By soul-engrossing instinct driven along
Through wood or open field, the harmless
Man 171
Departs, intent upon his onward quest!—
Nor is that Fellow-wanderer, so deem I,
Less to be envied, (you may trace him oft
By scars which his activity has left 175
Beside our roads and pathways, though,
thank Heaven!
This covert nook reports not of his hand)
He who with pocket-hammer smites the
edge
Of luckless rock or prominent stone,
disguised
In weather-stains or crusted o'er by
Nature 180
With her first growths, detaching by the
stroke
A chip or splinter—to resolve his doubts;
And, with that ready answer satisfied,
The substance classes by some barbarous
name,
And hurries on; or from the fragments
picks 185
His specimen, if but haply interveined
With sparkling mineral, or should crystal
cube
Lurk in its cells—and thinks himself en-
riched,
Wealthier, and doubtless wiser, than be-
fore!
Intrusted safely each to his pursuit, 190
Earnest alike, let both from hill to hill
Range; if it please them, speed from clime
to clime;
The mind is full—and free from pain
their pastime.'

'Then,' said I, interposing, 'One is
near,
Who cannot but possess in your esteem
Place worthier still of envy. May I name,
Without offence, that fair-faced cottage-
boy? 197
Dame Nature's pupil of the lowest form,
Youngest apprentice in the school of art!
Him, as we entered from the open glen,

You might have noticed, busily engaged,
Heart, soul, and hands,—in mending the
defects 202
Left in the fabric of a leaky dam
Raised for enabling this penurious stream
To turn a slender mill (that new-made
plaything) 205
For his delight—the happiest he of all!'

'Far happiest,' answered the despond-
ing Man,
'If, such as now he is, he might remain!
Ah! what avails imagination high
Or question deep? what profits all that
earth, 210
Or heaven's blue vault, is suffered to put
forth
Of impulse or allurement, for the Soul
To quit the beaten track of life, and soar
Far as she finds a yielding element
In past or future; far as she can go 215
Through time or space—if neither in the
one,
Nor in the other region, nor in aught
That Fancy, dreaming o'er the map of
things,
Hath placed beyond these penetrable
bounds,
Words of assurance can be heard; if no-
where 220
A habitation, for consummate good,
Or for progressive virtue, by the search
Can be attained,—a better sanctuary
From doubt and sorrow, than the sense-
less grave?'

'Is this,' the grey-haired Wanderer
mildly said, 225
'The voice, which we so lately overheard,
To that same child, addressing tenderly
The consolations of a hopeful mind?
"His body is at rest, his soul in heaven."
These were your words; and, verily,
methinks 230
Wisdom is oftentimes nearer when we stoop
Than when we soar.'

The Other, not displeased,
Promptly replied—'My notion is the
same.
And I, without reluctance, could decline
All act of inquisition whence we rise,
And what, when breath hath ceased, we
may become. 236
Here are we, in a bright and breathing
world.
Our origin, what matters it? In lack
Of worthier explanation, say at once
With the American (a thought which
suits 240
The place where now we stand) that
certain men
Leapt out together from a rocky cave;
And these were the first parents of man-
kind:

Or, if a different image be recalled
By the warm sunshine, and the jocund
voice

245
Of insects chirping out their careless lives
On these soft beds of thyme-besprinkled
turf,

Choose, with the gay Athenian, a conceit
As sound—blithe race! whose mantles
were bedecked

With golden grasshoppers, in sign that
they

250
Had sprung, like those bright creatures,
from the soil
Whereon their endless generations dwelt.

But stop! these theoretic fancies jar
On serious minds. then, as the Hindoos
draw

254
Their holy Ganges from a skyey fount,
Even so deduce the stream of human life
From seats of power divine; and hope, or
trust,

That our existence winds her stately
course
Beneath the sun, like Ganges, to make part
Of a living ocean; or, to sink engulfed,

Like Niger, in impenetrable sands

261
And utter darkness: thought which may
be faced,
Though comfortless!—

Not of myself I speak;
Such acquiescence neither doth imply,
In me, a meekly-bending spirit soothed
By natural piety; nor a lofty mind,

266
By philosophic discipline prepared
For calm subjection to acknowledged law;
Pleased to have been, contented not to be.
Such palms I boast not;—no! to me, who

find,

270
Reviewing my past way, much to con-
demn,
Little to praise, and nothing to regret,
(Save some remembrances of dream-like
joys

That scarcely seem to have belonged to
me)

If I must take my choice between the
pair

275
That rule alternately the weary hours,
Night is than day more acceptable; sleep
Doth, in my estimate of good, appear
A better state than waking; death than
sleep:

Feelingly sweet is stillness after storm,
Though under covert of the wormy
ground!

281
‘Yet be it said, in justice to myself,
That in more genial times, when I was
free

To explore the destiny of human kind
(Not as an intellectual game pursued

285
With curious subtlety, from wish to cheat
Irrksome sensations; but by love of truth
Urged on, or haply by intense delight

In feeding thought, wherever thought
could feed)

I did not rank with those (too dull or
nice,

290
For to my judgment such they then ap-
peared,
Or too aspiring, thankless at the best)

Who, in this frame of human life, perceive
An object whereunto their souls are tied
In discontented wedlock; nor did e’er,
From me, those dark impervious shades,

that hang

296
Upon the region whither we are bound,
Exclude a power to enjoy the vital beams
Of present sunshine.—Deities that float
On wings, angelic Spirits! I could muse
O’er what from eldest time we have been
told

301
Of your bright forms and glorious facul-
ties,
And with the imagination rest content,
Not wishing more; repining not to tread
The little sinuous path of earthly care,

By flowers embellished, and by springs
refreshed,

306
—“Blow winds of autumn!—let your chill-
ing breath
Take the live herbage from the mead, and
strip

The shady forest of its green attire,—
And let the bursting clouds to fury rouse
The gentle brooks!—Your desolating
sway,

311
Sheds,” I exclaimed, “no sadness upon me,
And no disorder in your rage I find.
What dignity, what beauty, in this change
From mild to angry, and from sad to gay,
Alternate and revolving! How benign,
How rich in animation and delight,
How bountiful these elements—compared
With aught, as more desirable and fair,
Devised by fancy for the golden age; 320
Or the perpetual warbling that prevails
In Arcady, beneath unaltered skies,
Through the long year in constant quiet
bound,

325
Night hushed as night, and day serene as
day!”
—But why this tedious record?—Age, we
know,

330
Is garrulous; and solitude is apt
To anticipate the privilege of Age.
From far ye come; and surely with a hope
Of better entertainment:—let us hence!’

Loth to forsake the spot, and still more
loth

335
To be diverted from our present theme,
I said, ‘My thoughts, agreeing, Sir, with
yours,

Would push this censure farther;—for, if
smiles

Of scornful pity be the just reward
Of Poesy thus courteously employed

335

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK III]

In framing models to improve the scheme
Of man's existence, and recast the world,
Why should not grave Philosophy be
 styled,

Herself, a dreamer of a kindred stock,
A dreamer yet more spiritless and dull?
Yes, shall the fine immunities she boasts
Establish sounder titles of esteem
For her, who (all too timid and reserved
For onset, for resistance too inert,
Too weak for suffering, and for hope too
 tame) 345

Placed, among flowery gardens curtained
 round

With world-excluding groves, the brother-
 hood

Of soft Epicureans, taught—if they
The ends of being would secure, and win
The crown of wisdom—to yield up their
 souls 350

To a voluptuous unconcern, preferring
Tranquillity to all things. Or is she,
I cried, 'more worthy of regard, the Power,
Who, for the sake of sterner quiet, closed
The Stoic's heart against the vain ap-
 proach 355
Of admiration, and all sense of joy?'

His countenance gave notice that my
 zeal
Accorded little with his present mind;
I ceased, and he resumed.—'Ah! gentle
 Sir,

Slight, if you will, the *means*; but spare
 to slight 360

The end of those, who did, by system, rank,
As the prime object of a wise man's aim,
Security from shock of accident,
Release from fear; and cherished peace-
 ful days

For their own sakes, as mortal life's chief
 good, 365

And only reasonable felicity.
What motive drew, what impulse, I would
 ask,

Through a long course of later ages, drove,
The hermit to his cell in forest wide;
Or what detained him, till his closing
 eyes 370

Took their last farewell of the sun and
 stars,

Fast anchored in the desert?—Not alone
Dread of the persecuting sword, remorse,
Wrongs unredressed, or insults unavenged
And unavengable, defeated pride, 375
Prosperity subverted, maddening want,
Friendship betrayed, affection un-
 returned,

Love with despair, or grief in agony;—
Not always from intolerable pangs
He fled; but, compassed round by plea-
 sure, sighed 380

For independent happiness; craving
 peace,

The central feeling of all happiness,
Not as a refuge from distress or pain,
A breathing-time, vacation, or a truce,
But for its absolute self; a life of peace,
Stability without regret or fear; 386
That hath been, is, and shall be ever-
 more!—

Such the reward he sought; and wore out
 life,

There, where on few external things his
 heart

Was set, and those his own; or, if not
 his, 390

Subsisting under nature's steadfast law.

'What other yearning was the master
 tie

Of the monastic brotherhood, upon rock
Aerial, or in green secluded vale,

One after one, collected from afar, 395
An undissolving fellowship?—What but
 this,

The universal instinct of repose,
The longing for confirmed tranquillity,
Inward and outward; humble, yet sub-
 lime:

The life where hope and memory are as
 one; 400

Where earth is quiet and her face un-
 changed

Save by the simplest toil of human hands
Or season's difference; the immortal Soul
Consistent in self-rule; and heaven re-
 vealed

To meditation in that quietness!— 405
Such was their scheme: and though the
 wished-for end

By multitudes was missed, perhaps at-
 tained

By none, they for the attempt, and pains
 employed,

Do, in my present censure, stand redeemed
From the unqualified disdain, that once

Would have been cast upon them by my
 voice 411

Delivering her decisions from the seat
Of forward youth—that scruples not to
 solve

Doubts, and determine questions, by the
 rules 414

Of inexperienced judgment, ever prone
To overweening faith; and is inflamed,

By courage, to demand from real life
The test of act and suffering, to provoke

Hostility—how dreadful when it comes,
Whether affliction be the foe, or guilt!

'A child of earth, I rested, in that
 stage 421

Of my past course to which these thoughts
 advert,

Upon earth's native energies; forgetting
That mine was a condition which required

Nor energy, nor fortitude—a calm 425

Without vicissitude; which, if the like
Had been presented to my view elsewhere,
I might have even been tempted to de-
spise.

But no—for the serene was also bright;
Enlivened happiness with joy o'erflowing,
With joy, and—oh! that memory should
survive

To speak the word—with rapture! Na-
ture's boon,

Life's genuine inspiration, happiness
Above what rules can teach, or fancy
feign;

Abused, as all possessions are abused
That are not prized according to their
worth.

And yet, what worth? what good is given
to men,

More solid than the gilded clouds of
heaven?

What joy more lasting than a vernal
flower?—

None! 'tis the general plaint of human
kind

In solitude: and mutually addressed
From each to all, for wisdom's sake:—

This truth
The priest announces from his holy seat:

And, crowned with garlands in the sum-
mer grove,

The poet fits it to his pensive lyre.

Yet, ere that final resting-place be gained,
Sharp contradictions may arise, by doom

Of this same life, compelling us to grieve
That the prosperities of love and joy

Should be permitted, oftentimes, to endure
So long, and be at once cast down for
ever.

Oh! tremble, ye, to whom hath been as-
signed

A course of days composing happy
months,

And they as happy years; the present
still

So like the past, and both so firm a pledge
Of a congenial future, that the wheels

Of pleasure move without the aid of hope:
For Mutability is Nature's bane;

And slighted Hope *will* be avenged; and,
when

Ye need her favours, ye shall find her not;
But in her stead—fear—doubt—and
agony!

This was the bitter language of the
heart:

But, while he spake, look, gesture, tone
of voice,

Though discomposed and vehement, were
such

As skill and graceful nature might sug-
gest

To a proficient of the tragic scene
Standing before the multitude, beset

With dark events. Desirous to divert
Or stern the current of the speaker's
thoughts,

We signified a wish to leave that place
Of stillness and close privacy, a nook

That seemed for self-examination made;
Or, for confession, in the sinner's need,

Hidden from all men's view. To our at-
tempt

He yielded not; but, pointing to a slope
Of mossy turf defended from the sun,

And on that couch inviting us to rest,
Full on that tender-hearted Man he
turned

A serious eye, and his speech thus re-
newed.

'You never saw, your eyes did never
look

On the bright form of Her whom once I
loved:—

Her silver voice was heard upon the earth,
A sound unknown to you; else, honoured

Friend!
Your heart had borne a pitiable share

Of what I suffered, when I wept that loss,
And suffer now, not seldom, from the
thought

That I remember, and can weep no more.—
Stripped as I am of all the golden fruit

Of self-esteem; and by the cutting blasts
Of self-reproach familiarly assailed;

Yet would I not be of such wintry bare-
ness

But that some leaf of your regard should
hang

Upon my naked branches:—lively
thoughts

Give birth, full often, to unguarded words;
I grieve that, in your presence, from my
tongue

Too much of frailty hath already dropped;
But that too much demands still more.

You know,
Revered Compatriot—and to you, kind

Sir,
(Not to be deemed a stranger, as you come

Following the guidance of these welcome
feet

To our secluded vale) it may be told—
That my demerits did not sue in vain

To One on whose mild radiance many
gazed

With hope, and all with pleasure. This
fair Bride—

In the devotedness of youthful love, 305
Preferring me to parents, and the choir

Of gay companions, to the natal roof,
And all known places and familiar sights

(Resigned with sadness gently weighing
down

Her trembling expectations, but no more
Than did to her due honour, and to me

Yielded, that day, a confidence sublime

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK III]

In what I had to build upon)—this Bride,
Young, modest, meek, and beautiful, I led
To a low cottage in a sunny bay, 515
Where the salt sea innocuously breaks,
And the sea breeze as innocently breathes,
On Devon's leafy shores;—a sheltered
hold,

In a soft clime encouraging the soil 519
To a luxuriant bounty!—As our steps
Approach the embowered abode—our
chosen seat—

See, rooted in the earth, her kindly bed,
The unendangered myrtle, decked with
flowers,

Before the threshold stands to welcome
us!

While, in the flowering myrtle's neigh-
bourhood, 525

Not overlooked but courting no regard,
Those native plants, the holly and the yew,
Gave modest intimation to the mind
How willingly their aid they would unite
With the green myrtle, to endear the
hours 530

Of winter, and protect that pleasant place.
—Wild were the walks upon those lonely
Downs,

Track leading into track; how marked,
how worn

Into bright verdure, between fern and
gorse,

Winding away its never-ending line 535
On their smooth surface, evidence was
none:

But, there, lay open to our daily haunt,
A range of unappropriated earth,
Where youth's ambitious feet might move
at large;

Whence, unmolested wanderers, we be-
held 540

The shining giver of the day diffuse
His brightness o'er a tract of sea and land
Gay as our spirits, free as our desires;
As our enjoyments, boundless.—From
those heights

We dropped, at pleasure, into sylvan
combs; 545

Where arbours of impenetrable shade,
And mossy seats, detained us side by side,
With hearts at ease, and knowledge in
our hearts

"That all the grove and all the day was
ours."

'O happy time! still happier was at
hand; 550

For Nature called my Partner to resign
Her share in the pure freedom of that life,
Enjoyed by us in common.—To my hope,
To my heart's wish, my tender Mate be-
came

The thankful captive of maternal bonds;
And those wild paths were left to me
alone. 556

There could I meditate on follies past;
And, like a weary voyager escaped
From risk and hardship, inwardly retrace
A course of vain delights and thoughtless
guilt, 560

And self-indulgence—without shame pur-
sued,

There, undisturbed, could think of and
could thank

Her whose submissive spirit was to me
Rule and restraint—my guardian—shall
I say

That earthly Providence, whose guiding
love 565

Within a port of rest had lodged me safe;
Safe from temptation, and from danger
far?

Strains followed of acknowledgment ad-
dressed

To an Authority enthroned above
The reach of sight; from whom, as from
their source, 570

Proceed all visible ministers of good
That walk the earth—Father of heaven
and earth,

Father, and king, and judge, adored and
feared!

These acts of mind, and memory, and
heart,

And spirit—interrupted and relieved 575
By observations transient as the glance
Of flying sunbeams, or to the outward
form

Cleaving with power inherent and intense,
As the mute insect fixed upon the plant
On whose soft leaves it hangs, and from
whose cup 580

It draws its nourishment imperceptibly—
Endeared my wanderings; and the
mother's kiss

And infant's smile awaited my return.

'In privacy we dwelt, a wedded pair,
Companions daily, often all day long; 585
Not placed by fortune within easy reach
Of various intercourse, nor wishing aught
Beyond the allowance of our own fireside,

The twain within our happy cottage born,
Inmates, and heirs of our united love; 590
Graced mutually by difference of sex,
And with no wider interval of time
Between their several births than served
for one

To establish something of a leader's sway;
Yet left them joined by sympathy in
age; 595

Equals in pleasure, fellows in pursuit.
On these two pillars rested as in air
Our solitude.

It soothes me to perceive,
Your courtesy withholds not from my
words

Attentive audience. But, oh! gentle
Friends, 600

As times of quiet and unbroken peace,
Though, for a nation, times of blessed-

ness,
Give back faint echoes from the historian's
page;

So, in the imperfect sounds of this dis-

course,
Depressed I hear, how faithless is the
voice

Which those most blissful days rever-

berate.
What special record can, or need, be given
To rules and habits, whereby much was
done,

But all within the sphere of little things;
Of humble, though, to us, important cares,
And precious interests? Smoothly did
our life

Advance, swerving not from the path
prescribed;

Her annual, her diurnal, round alike
Maintained with faithful care. And you
divine

The worst effects that our condition saw
If you imagine changes slowly wrought,
And in their process unperceivable;

Not wished for; sometimes noticed with
a sigh,

(Whate'er of good or lovely they might
bring)

Sighs of regret, for the familiar good
And loveliness endeared which they re-

'Seven years of occupation undisturbed
Established seemingly a right to hold
That happiness; and use and habit gave.

To what an alien spirit had acquired
A patrimonial sanctity. And thus,

With thoughts and wishes bounded to this
world,

I lived and breathed; most grateful—if
to enjoy

Without repining or desire for more,
For different lot, or change to higher
sphere,

(Only except some impulses of pride
With no determined object, though up-

held
By theories with suitable support)—

Most grateful, if in such wise to enjoy
Be proof of gratitude for what we have;

Else, I allow, most thankless.—But, at
once,

From some dark seat of fatal power was
urged

A claim that shattered all.—Our bloom-

ing girl,
Caught in the gripe of death, with such
brief time

To struggle in as scarcely would allow
Her cheek to change its colour, was
conveyed

From us to inaccessible worlds, to regions

Where height, or depth, admits not the
approach

Of living man, though longing to pursue.
—With even as brief a warning—and how
soon,

With what short interval of time between,
I tremble yet to think of—our last prop,

Our happy life's only remaining stay—
The brother followed; and was seen no
more!

'Calm as a frozen lake when ruthless
winds

Blow fiercely, agitating earth and sky,
The Mother now remained; as if in her,

Who, to the lowest region of the soul,
Had been erewhile unsettled and dis-

turbed,
This second visitation had no power
To shake; but only to bind up and seal;

And to establish thankfulness of heart
In Heaven's determinations, ever just.

The eminence whereon her spirit stood,
Mine was unable to attain. Immense

The space that severed us! But, as the
sight

Communicates with heaven's ethereal
orbs

Incalculably distant; so, I felt
That consolation may descend from far

(And that is intercourse, and union, too.)
While, overcome with speechless grati-

tude,
And, with a holier love inspired, I looked
On her—at once superior to my woes

And partner of my loss.—O heavy change!
Dimness o'er this clear luminary crept

Insensibly;—the immortal and divine
Yielded to mortal reflux; her pure glory,

As from the pinnacle of worldly state
Wretched ambition drops astounded, fell

Into a gulf obscure of silent grief,
And keen heart-anguish—of itself a-

shamed,
Yet obstinately cherishing itself:

And, so consumed, she melted from my
arms;

And left me, on this earth, disconsolate!

'What followed cannot be reviewed in
thought;

Much less, retraced in words. If she,
of life

Blameless, so intimate with love and joy
And all the tender motions of the soul,

Had been supplanted, could I hope to
stand—

Infirm, dependant, and now destitute?
I called on dreams and visions, to disclose

That which is veiled from waking thought;
conjured

Eternity, as men constrain a ghost
To appear and answer; to the grave I
spake

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK III]

Imploringly;—looked up, and asked the
Heavens 690

If Angels traversed their cerulean floors,
If fixed or wandering star could tidings
yield

Of the departed spirit—what abode
It occupies—what consciousness retains
Of former loves and interests. Then my
soul 695

Turned inward,—to examine of what stuff
Time's fetters are composed; and life was
put

To inquisition, long and profitless!
By pain of heart—now checked—and now
impelled—

The intellectual power, through words
and things, 700

Went sounding on, a dim and perilous
way!

And from those transports, and these toils
abstruse,

Some trace am I enabled to retain
Of time, else lost;—existing unto me
Only by records in myself not found. 705

'From that abstraction I was roused,—
and how?

Even as a thoughtful shepherd by a flash
Of lightning startled in a gloomy cave
Of these wild hills. For, lo! the dread
Bastille,

With all the chambers in its horrid towers,
Fell to the ground:—by violence over-
thrown 711

Of indignation; and with shouts that
drowned

The crash it made in falling! From the
wreck

A golden palace rose, or seemed to rise,
The appointed seat of equitable law 715
And mild paternal sway. The potent
shock

I felt: the transformation I perceived,
As marvellously seized as in that moment
When, from the blind mist issuing, I
beheld

Glory—beyond all glory ever seen, 720
Confusion infinite of heaven and earth,
Dazzling the soul. Meanwhile, prophetic
harps

In every grove were ringing, "War shall
cease;

Did ye not hear that conquest is abjured?
Bring garlands, bring forth choicest
flowers, to deck 725

The tree of Liberty."—My heart re-
bounded;

My melancholy voice the chorus joined;
—"Be joyful all ye nations; in all lands,
Ye that are capable of joy be glad!

Henceforth, whate'er is wanting to your-
selves 730

In others ye shall promptly find;—and all,
Enriched by mutual and reflected wealth,

Shall with one heart honour their common
kind."

'Thus was I reconverted to the world;
Society became my glittering bride, 735
And airy hopes my children.—From the
depths

Of natural passion, seemingly escaped,
My soul diffused herself in wide embrace
Of institutions, and the forms of things;
As they exist, in mutable array, 740
Upon life's surface. What, though in my
veins

There flowed no Gallic blood, nor had I
breathed

The air of France, not less than Gallic
zeal

Kindled and burnt among the sapless
twigs

Of my exhausted heart. If busy men 745
In sober conclave met, to weave a web
Of amity, whose living threads should
stretch

Beyond the seas, and to the farthest pole,
There did I sit, assisting. If, with noise
And acclamation, crowds in open air 750
Expressed the tumult of their minds, my
voice

There mingled, heard or not. The powers
of song

I left not uninvoked; and, in still groves,
Where mild enthusiasts tuned a pensive
lay 754

Of thanks and expectation, in accord
With their belief, I sang Saturnian rule
Returned,—a progeny of golden years
Permitted to descend, and bless mankind.
—With promises the Hebrew Scriptures
teem:

I felt their invitation; and resumed 760
A long-suspended office in the House
Of public worship, where, the glowing
phrase

Of ancient inspiration serving me,
I promised also,—with undaunted trust
Foretold, and added prayer to prophecy;
The admiration winning of the crowd; 766
The help desiring of the pure devout.

'Scorn and contempt forbid me to
proceed!

But History, time's slavish scribe, will
tell

How rapidly the zealots of the cause 770
Disbanded—or in hostile ranks appeared;
Some, tired of honest service; these, out-
done,

Disgusted therefore, or appalled, by aims
Of fiercer zealots—so confusion reigned,
And the more faithful were compelled to
exclaim, 775

As Brutus did to Virtue, "Liberty,
I worshipped thee, and find thee but a
Shade!"

'Such recantation had for me no charm,
Nor would I bend to it; who should have
grieved

At aught, however fair, that bore the mien
Of a conclusion, or catastrophe. 781
Why then conceal, that, when the simply
good

In timid selfishness withdrew, I sought
Other support, not scrupulous whence it
came;

And, by what compromise it stood, not
nice? 785
Enough if notions seemed to be high-
pitched,

And qualities determined.—Among men
So character'd did I maintain a strife
Hopeless, and still more hopeless every
hour;

But, in the process, I began to feel 790
That, if the emancipation of the world
Were missed, I should at least secure my
own,

And be in part compensated. For rights,
Widely—invariably usurped upon,
I spake with vehemence; and promptly
seized 795

All that Abstraction furnished for my
needs

Or purposes; nor scrupled to proclaim,
And propagate, by liberty of life,
Those new persuasions. Not that I re-
joiced,

Or even found pleasure, in such vagrant
course, 800
For its own sake; but farthest from the
walk

Which I had trod in happiness and peace,
Was most inviting to a troubled mind;
That, in a struggling and distempered
world,

Saw a seductive image of herself. 805
Yet, mark the contradictions of which
Man

Is still the sport! Here Nature was my
guide,

The Nature of the dissolute; but thee,
O fostering Nature! I rejected—smiled
At others' tears in pity; and in scorn
At those, which thy soft influence some-
times drew 811

From my unguarded heart.—The tranquil
shores

Of Britain circumscribed me; else, per-
haps

I might have been entangled among deeds,
Which, now, as infamous, I should
abhor—

Despise, as senseless: for my spirit re-
lished 816

Strangely the exasperation of that Land,
Which turned an angry beak against the
down

Of her own breast; confounded into hope
Of disencumbering thus her fretful wings.

'But all was quieted by iron bonds 821
Of military sway. The shifting aims,
The moral interests, the creative might,
The varied functions and high attributes
Of civil action, yielded to a power 825
Formal, and odious, and contemptible.
—In Britain, ruled a panic dread of
change;

The weak were praised, rewarded, and
advanced;

And, from the impulse of a just disdain,
Once more did I retire into myself. 830
There feeling no contentment, I resolved
To fly, for safeguard, to some foreign
shore,

Remote from Europe; from her blasted
hopes;

Her fields of carnage, and polluted air.

'Fresh blew the wind, when o'er the
Atlantic Main 835

The ship went gliding with her thought-
less crew;

And who among them but an Exile, freed
From discontent, indifferent, pleased to
sit

Among the busily-employed, not more
With obligation charged, with service
taxed, 840

Than the loose pendant—to the idle wing
Upon the tall mast streaming. But, ye
Powers

Of soul and sense mysteriously allied,
O, never let the Wretched, if a choice
Be left him, trust the freight of his dis-
tress 845

To a long voyage on the silent deep!
For, like a plague, will memory break out;
And, in the blank and solitude of things,
Upon his spirit, with a fever's strength,

Will conscience prey.—Feebly must they
have felt 850

Who, in old time, attired with snakes and
whips

The vengeful Furies. *Beautiful regards*
Were turned on me—the face of her I
loved;

The Wife and Mother pitifully fixing
Tender reproaches, insupportable! 855
Where now that boasted liberty? No
welcome

From unknown objects I received; and
those,

Known and familiar, which the vaulted
sky

Did, in the placid clearness of the night,
Disclose, had accusations to prefer 860

Against my peace. Within the cabin
stood

That volume—as a compass for the soul—
Revered among the nations. I implored
Its guidance; but the infallible support
Of faith was wanting. Tell me, why
refused 865

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK III]

To One by storms annoyed and adverse
winds;
Perplexed with currents; of his weak-
ness sick;
Of vain endeavours tired; and by his own,
And by his nature's, ignorance, dismayed!

'Long wished-for sight, the Western
World appeared; 870
And, when the ship was moored, I leaped
ashore
Indignantly—resolved to be a man,
Who, having o'er the past no power,
would live
No longer in subjection to the past, 874
With abject mind—from a tyrannic lord
Inviting penance, fruitlessly endured:
So, like a fugitive, whose feet have cleared
Some boundary, which his followers may
not cross
In prosecution of their deadly chase,
Respiring I looked round.—How bright
the sun, 880
The breeze how soft! Can any thing
produced
In the old World compare, thought I, for
power
And majesty with this gigantic stream,
Sprung from the desert? And behold a
city
Fresh, youthful, and aspiring! What are
these 885
To me, or I to them? As much, at least
As he desires that they should be, whom
winds
And waves have wafted to this distant
shore,
In the condition of a damaged seed,
Whose fibres cannot, if they would, take
root. 890
Here may I roam at large;—my business
is,
Roaming at large, to observe, and not to
feel
And, therefore, not to act—convinced
that all
Which bears the name of action, how-
soever
Beginning, ends in servitude—still pain-
ful, 895
And mostly profitless. And, sooth to say,
On nearer view, a motley spectacle
Appeared, of high pretensions—unre-
proved
But by the obstreperous voice of higher
still; 899
Big passions strutting on a petty stage;
Which a detached spectator may regard
Not unamused.—But ridicule demands
Quick change of objects; and, to laugh
alone, 903
At a composing distance from the haunts
Of strife and folly, though it be a treat
As choice as musing Leisure can bestow;

Yet, in the very centre of the crowd,
To keep the secret of a poignant scorn,
Howe'er to airy Demons suitable,
Of all unsocial courses, is least fit 910
For the gross spirit of mankind,—the one
That soonest fails to please, and quickest
turns

Into vexation.

Let us, then, I said,
Leave this unknit Republic to the scourge
Of her own passions; and to regions haste,
Whose shades have never felt the en-
croaching axe, 916
Or soil endured a transfer in the mart
Of dire rapacity. There, Man abides,
Primeval Nature's child. A creature weak
In combination, (wherefore else driven
back 920

So far, and of his old inheritance
So easily deprived?) but, for that cause,
More dignified, and stronger in himself;
Whether to act, judge, suffer, or enjoy.
True, the intelligence of social art 925
Hath overpowered his forefathers, and
soon

Will sweep the remnant of his line away;
But contemplations, worthier, nobler far
Than her destructive energies, attend 929
His independence, when along the side
Of Mississippi, or that northern stream¹
That spreads into successive seas, he
walks;

Pleased to perceive his own unshackled
life,
And his innate capacities of soul,
There imaged: or when, having gained
the top 935

Of some commanding eminence, which
yet
Intruder ne'er beheld, he thence surveys
Regions of wood and wide savannah, vast
Expanse of unappropriated earth,
With mind that sheds a light on what he
sees; 940

Free as the sun, and lonely as the sun,
Pouring above his head its radiance down
Upon a living and rejoicing world!

'So, westward, tow'rd the unviolated
woods

I bent my way; and, roaming far and
wide, 945

Failed not to greet the merry Mocking-
bird;

And, while the melancholy Muccawiss
(The sportive bird's companion in the
grove)

Repeated o'er and o'er his plaintive cry,
I sympathised at leisure with the sound;
But that pure archetype of human great-
ness, 951

I found him not. There, in his stead,
appeared

¹ See Note, p. 727.

A creature, squalid, vengeful, and impure;
Remorseless, and submissive to no law
But superstitious fear, and abject sloth.

'Enough is told! Here am I—ye have
heard⁹⁵⁶
What evidence I seek, and vainly seek;
What from my fellow-beings I require,
And either they have not to give, or I
Lack virtue to receive; what I myself,
Too oft by wilful forfeiture, have lost⁹⁶¹
Nor can regain. How languidly I look
Upon this visible fabric of the world,
May be divined—perhaps it hath been
said:—⁹⁶⁴
But spare your pity, if there be in me
Aught that deserves respect: for I exist,
Within myself, not comfortless.—The
tenour
Which my life holds, he readily may con-
ceive
Whoe'er hath stood to watch a mountain
brook
In some still passage of its course, and
seen,⁹⁷⁰
Within the depths of its capacious breast,
Inverted trees, rocks, clouds, and azure
sky;

And, on its glassy surface, specks of
foam,
And conglobated bubbles undissolved,
Numerous as stars; that, by their onward
lapse,⁹⁷⁵
Betray to sight the motion of the stream,
Else imperceptible. Meanwhile, is heard
A softened roar, or murmur; and the
sound
Though soothing, and the little floating
isles
Though beautiful, are both by Nature
charged⁹⁸⁰
With the same pensive office; and make
known
Through what perplexing labyrinths, ab-
rupt
Precipitations, and untoward straits,
The earth-born wanderer hath passed;
and quickly,⁹⁸⁴
That respite o'er, like traverses and toils
Must he again encounter.—Such a stream
Is human Life; and so the Spirit fares
In the best quiet to her course allowed;
And such is mine,—save only for a hope
That my particular current soon will reach
The unfathomable gulf, where all is
still!⁹⁹¹

BOOK FOURTH

DESPONDENCY CORRECTED

ARGUMENT

State of feeling produced by the foregoing Narrative.—A belief in a superintending Providence the only adequate support under affliction.—Wanderer's ejaculation.—Acknowledges the difficulty of a lively faith.—Hence immoderate sorrow.—Exhortations.—How received.—Wanderer applies his discourse to that other cause of dejection in the Solitary's mind.—Disappointment from the French Revolution.—States grounds of hope, and insists on the necessity of patience and fortitude with respect to the course of great revolutions.—Knowledge the source of tranquillity.—Rural Solitude favourable to knowledge of the inferior Creatures; Study of their habits and ways recommended; exhortation to bodily exertion and communion with Nature.—Morbid Solitude pitiable.—Superstition better than apathy.—Apathy and destitution unknown in the infancy of society.—The various modes of Religion prevented it.—Illustrated in the Jewish, Persian, Babylonian, Chaldean, and Grecian modes of belief.—Solitary interposes.—Wanderer points out the influence of religious and imaginative feeling in the humble ranks of society, illustrated from present and past times.—These principles tend to recall exploded superstitions and Popery.—Wanderer rebuts this charge, and contrasts the dignities of the Imagination with the presumptuous littleness of certain modern Philosophers.—Recommends other lights and guides.—Asserts the power of the Soul to regenerate herself; Solitary asks how.—Reply.—Personal appeal.—Exhortation to activity of body renewed.—How to commune with Nature.—Wanderer concludes with a legitimate union of the imagination, affections, understanding, and reason.—Effect of his discourse.—Evening; Return to the Cottage.

HERE closed the Tenant of that lonely vale While we sate listening with compassion due.
His mournful narrative—commenced in A pause of silence followed; then, with
pain, voice
In pain commenced, and ended without That did not falter though the heart was
peace: moved,
Yet tempered, not unfrequently, with The Wanderer said:—
strains 'One adequate support 10
Of native feeling, grateful to our minds; For the calamities of mortal life
And yielding surely some relief to his, 6 Exists—one only; an assured belief

That the procession of our fate, howe'er
Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being
Of infinite benevolence and power; 15
Whose everlasting purposes embrace
All accidents, converting them to good.
—The darts of anguish fix not where the
seat

Of suffering hath been thoroughly fortified
By acquiescence in the Will supreme 20
For time and for eternity; by faith,
Faith absolute in God, including hope,
And the defence that lies in boundless
love

Of his perfections; with habitual dread
Of aught unworthily conceived, endured
Impatiently, ill-done, or left undone, 26
To the dishonour of his holy name.
Soul of our Souls, and safeguard of the
world!

Sustain, thou only canst, the sick of heart;
Restore their languid spirits, and recall
Their lost affections unto thee and
thine! 31

Then, as we issued from that covert
nook,

He thus continued, lifting up his eyes
To heaven:—'How beautiful this dome
of sky;

And the vast hills, in fluctuation fixed 35
At thy command, how awful! Shall the
Soul,

Human and rational, report of thee
Even less than these!—Be mute who will,
who can,

Yet I will praise thee with impassioned
voice:

My lips, that may forget thee in the
crowd, 40

Cannot forget thee here; where thou hast
built,

For thy own glory, in the wilderness!
Me didst thou constitute a priest of thine,

In such a temple as we now behold
Reared for thy presence: therefore am I
bound 45

To worship, here, and everywhere—as one
Not doomed to ignorance, though forced
to tread,

From childhood up, the ways of poverty;
From unreflecting ignorance preserved,

And from debasement rescued.—By thy
grace 50

The particle divine remained unquenched;
And, 'mid the wild weeds of a rugged soil,
Thy bounty caused to flourish deathless
flowers,

From paradise transplanted: wintry age
Impends; the frost will gather round my
heart; 55

If the flowers wither, I am worse than
dead!

—Come, labour, when the worn-out frame
requires

Perpetual sabbath; come, disease and
want;

And sad exclusion through decay of
sense;

But leave me unabated trust in thee— 60
And let thy favour, to the end of life,
Inspire me with ability to seek

Repose and hope among eternal things—
Father of heaven and earth! and I am

rich,
And will possess my portion in content!

'And what are things eternal?—powers
depart,' 66

The grey-haired Wanderer steadfastly
replied,

Answering the question which himself
had asked,

'Possessions vanish, and opinions change,
And passions hold a fluctuating seat: 70

But, by the storms of circumstance un-
shaken,

And subject neither to eclipse nor wane,
Duty exists;—immutably survive,

For our support, the measures and the
forms,

Which an abstract intelligence supplies;
Whose kingdom is, where time and space

are not. 76

Of other converse which mind, soul, and
heart,

Do, with united urgency, require,
What more that may not perish?—Thou,

dread source, 79

Prime, self-existing cause and end of all
That in the scale of being fill their place;

Above our human region, or below,
Set and sustained;—thou, who didst wrap
the cloud

Of infancy around us, that thyself,
Therein, with our simplicity awhile 85

Might'st hold, on earth, communion un-
disturbed;

Who from the anarchy of dreaming sleep,
Or from its death-like void, with punctual

care,

And touch as gentle as the morning light,
Restor'st us, daily, to the powers of sense

And reason's steadfast rule—thou, thou
alone 91

Art everlasting, and the blessed Spirits,
Which thou includest, as the sea her

waves:

For adoration thou endur'st; endure
For consciousness the motions of thy will;

For apprehension those transcendent
truths 96

Of the pure intellect, that stand as laws
(Submission constituting strength and

power)
Even to thy Being's infinite majesty!

This universe shall pass away—a work 100
Glorious! because the shadow of thy
might,

A step, or link, for intercourse with thee.
 Ah! if the time must come, in which my
 feet
 No more shall stray where meditation
 leads,
 By flowing stream, through wood, or
 craggy wild, ¹⁰⁵
 Loved haunts like these; the unim-
 prisoned Mind
 May yet have scope to range among her
 own,
 Her thoughts, her images, her high desires.
 If the dear faculty of sight should fail, ¹⁰⁹
 Still, it may be allowed me to remember
 What visionary powers of eye and soul
 In youth were mine; when, stationed on
 the top
 Of some huge hill, expectant, I beheld
 The sun rise up, from distant climes
 returned
 Darkness to chase, and sleep; and bring
 the day ¹¹⁵
 His bounteous gift! or saw him toward
 the deep
 Sink, with a retinue of flaming clouds
 Attended; then, my spirit was entranced
 With joy exalted to beatitude:
 The measure of my soul was filled with
 bliss, ¹²⁰
 And holiest love; as earth, sea, air, with
 light,
 With pomp, with glory, with magni-
 ficence!

‘Those fervent raptures are for ever
 flown;
 And, since their date, my soul hath under-
 gone ¹²⁴
 Change manifold, for better or for worse:
 Yet cease I not to struggle, and aspire
 Heavenward; and chide the part of me
 that flags,
 Through sinful choice; or dread necessity
 On human nature from above imposed.
 ’Tis, by comparison, an easy task ¹³⁰
 Earth to despise; but, to converse with
 heaven—
 This is not easy:—to relinquish all
 We have, or hope, of happiness and joy,
 And stand in freedom loosened from this
 world,
 I deem not arduous; but must needs
 confess ¹³⁵
 That ’tis a thing impossible to frame
 Conceptions equal to the soul’s desires;
 And the most difficult of tasks to keep
 Heights which the soul is competent to
 gain.
 —Man is of dust: ethereal hopes are his,
 Which, when they should sustain them-
 selves aloft, ¹⁴¹
 Want due consistence; like a pillar of
 smoke,

¹ See Note, p. 728.

That with majestic energy from earth
 Rises; but, having reached the thinner
 air,
 Melts, and dissolves, and is no longer seen.
 From this infirmity of mortal kind ¹⁴⁶
 Sorrow proceeds, which else were not;
 at least,
 If grief be something hallowed and or-
 dained,
 If, in proportion, it be just and meet,
 Yet, through this weakness of the general
 heart, ¹⁵⁰
 Is it enabled to maintain its hold
 In that excess which conscience dis-
 approves.
 For who could sink and settle to that
 point
 Of selfishness; so senseless who could be
 As long and perseveringly to mourn ¹⁵⁵
 For any object of his love, removed
 From this unstable world, if he could fix
 A satisfying view upon that state
 Of pure, imperishable, blessedness,
 Which reason promises, and holy writ ¹⁶⁰
 Ensures to all believers?—Yet mistrust
 Is of such incapacity, methinks,
 No natural branch; despondency far less;
 And, least of all, is absolute despair.
 —And, if there be whose tender frames
 have drooped ¹⁶⁵
 Even to the dust: apparently, through
 weight
 Of anguish unrelieved, and lack of power
 An agonizing sorrow to transmute;
 Deem not that proof is here of hope with-
 held
 When wanted most; a confidence im-
 paired ¹⁷⁰
 So pitifully, that, having ceased to see
 With bodily eyes, they are borne down by
 love
 Of what is lost, and perish through regret.
 Oh! no, the innocent Sufferer often sees
 Too clearly; feels too vividly; and longs
 To realize the vision, with intense ¹⁷⁶
 And over-constant yearning;—there—
 there lies
 The excess, by which the balance is de-
 stroyed.
 Too, too contracted are these walls of
 flesh,
 This vital warmth too cold, these visual
 orbs, ¹⁸⁰
 Though inconceivably endowed, too dim
 For any passion of the soul that leads
 To ecstasy; and all the crooked paths
 Of time and change disdaining, takes its
 course
 Along the line of limitless desires. ¹⁸⁵
 I, speaking now from such disorder free,
 Nor rapt, nor craving, but in settled
 peace,
 I cannot doubt that they whom you de-
 plore

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK IV

Are glorified; or, if they sleep, shall wake
From sleep, and dwell with God in endless love. ¹⁹⁰

Hope, below this, consists not with belief
In mercy, carried infinite degrees
Beyond the tenderness of human hearts:
Hope, below this, consists not with belief
In perfect wisdom, guiding mightiest power, ¹⁹⁵
That finds no limits but her own pure will.

'Here then we rest; not fearing for our
creed

The worst that human reasoning can
achieve,

To unsettle or perplex it: yet with pain
Acknowledging, and grievous self-reproach, ²⁰⁰

That, though immovably convinced, we
want

Zeal, and the virtue to exist by faith
As soldiers live by courage; as, by strength

Of heart, the sailor fights with roaring seas.
Alas! the endowment of immortal power

Is matched unequally with custom, time,¹
And domineering faculties of sense

In all; in most with superadded foes,
Idle temptations; open vanities,

Ephemeral offspring of the unblushing
world; ²¹⁰

And, in the private regions of the mind,
Ill-governed passions, ranklings of despite,
Immoderate wishes, pining discontent,
Distress and care. What then remains?—

To seek
Those helps for his occasions ever near

Who lacks not will to use them; vows,
renewed ²¹⁶

On the first motion of a holy thought;
Vigils of contemplation; praise; and

prayer—
A stream, which, from the fountain of

the heart ²¹⁹
Issuing, however feebly, nowhere flows

Without access of unexpected strength.
But, above all, the victory is most sure

For him, who, seeking faith by virtue,
strives

To yield entire submission to the law
Of conscience—conscience revered

and obeyed, ²²⁵
As God's most intimate presence in the

soul,
And his most perfect image in the world.

—Endeavour thus to live; these rules
regard;

These helps solicit; and a steadfast seat
Shall then be yours among the happy few

Who dwell on earth, yet breathe empyreal air, ²³¹

Sons of the morning. For your nobler
part,

Ere disencumbered of her mortal chains,
Doubt shall be quelled and trouble chased
away;

With only such degree of sadness left ²³⁵
As may support longings of pure desire;
And strengthen love, rejoicing secretly
In the sublime attractions of the grave.'

While, in this strain, the venerable Sage
Poured forth his aspirations, and announced ²⁴⁰

His judgments, near that lonely house we
paced

A plot of green-sward, seemingly preserved

By nature's care from wreck of scattered
stones,

And from encroachment of encircling
heath:

Small space! but, for reiterated steps,
Smooth and commodious; as a stately

deck ²⁴⁶
Which to and fro the mariner is used

To tread for pastime, talking with his
mates,

Or happily thinking of far-distant friends,
While the ship glides before a steady

breeze. ²⁵⁰
Stillness prevailed around us: and the

voice
That spake was capable to lift the soul

Toward regions yet more tranquil. But,
methought,

That he, whose fixed despondency had
given

Impulse and motive to that strong discourse, ²⁵⁵

Was less upraised in spirit than abashed;
Shrinking from admonition, like a man

Who feels that to exhort is to reproach.
Yet not to be diverted from his aim,

The Sage continued:—
'For that other loss, ²⁶⁰

The loss of confidence in social man,
By the unexpected transports of our age

Carried so high, that every thought, which
looked

Beyond the temporal destiny of the Kind,
To many seemed superfluous—as, no

cause ²⁶⁵
Could e'er for such exalted confidence

Exist; so, none is now for fixed despair:
The two extremes are equally disowned

By reason: if, with sharp recoil, from
one

You have been driven far as its opposite,
Between them seek the point whereon to

build ²⁷¹
Sound expectations. So doth he advise

Who shared at first the illusion; but was
soon

Cast from the pedestal of pride by shocks
Which Nature gently gave, in woods and

fields; ²⁷⁵

¹ See Note, p. 728.

Nor unproved by Providence, thus speaking

To the inattentive children of the world:
"Vain-glorious Generation! what new powers

On you have been conferred? what gifts, withheld

From your progenitors, have ye received, 279
Fit recompense of new desert? what claim
Are ye prepared to urge, that my decrees
For you should undergo a sudden change;

And the weak functions of one busy day,
Reclaiming and extirpating, perform 285

What all the slowly-moving years of time,
With their unduly force, have left undone?

By nature's gradual processes be taught;
By story be confounded! Ye aspire

Rashly, to fall once more; and that false fruit, 290

Which, to your overweening spirits, yields

Hope of a flight celestial, will produce
Misery and shame. But Wisdom of her sons

Shall not the less, though late, be justified."

'Such timely warning,' said the Wanderer, 'gave

That visionary voice; and, at this day, 295
When a Tartarean darkness overspreads
The groaning nations; when the impious rule,

By will or by established ordinance,
Their own dire agents, and constrain the good

To acts which they abhor; though I bewail

This triumph, yet the pity of my heart
Prevents me not from owning, that the law,

By which mankind now suffers, is most just. 304

For by superior energies; more strict
Affiance in each other; faith more firm

In their unhallowed principles; the bad
Have fairly earned a victory o'er the weak,

The vacillating, inconsistent good.
Therefore, not unconsoled, I wait—in hope

To see the moment, when the righteous cause

Shall gain defenders zealous and devout
As they who have opposed her; in which Virtue

Will, to her efforts, tolerate no bounds
That are not lofty as her rights; aspiring

By impulse of her own ethereal zeal. 316
That spirit only can redeem mankind;

And when that sacred spirit shall appear,
Then shall our triumph be complete as theirs.

Yet, should this confidence prove vain, 320

the wise

Have still the keeping of their proper peace;

Are guardians of their own tranquillity.
They act, or they rege, observe, and feel;

"Knowing the heart of man is set to be¹
The centre of this world, about the which

Those revolutions of disturbances 326
Still roll; where all the aspects of misery
Predominate; whose strong effects are such

As he must bear, being powerless to redress;

And that unless above himself he can 330
Erect himself, how poor a thing is man?"

'Happy is he who lives to understand,
Not human nature only, but explores

All natures,—to the end that he may find
The law that governs each; and where begins

The union, the partition where, that makes
Kind and degree, among all visible Beings;

The constitutions, powers, and faculties,
Which they inherit,—cannot step beyond,— 339

And cannot fall beneath; that do assign
To every class its station and its office,

Through all the mighty commonwealth of things;

Up from the creeping plant to sovereign Man.

Such converse, if directed by a meek,
Sincere, and humble spirit, teaches love:

For knowledge is delight; and such delight 346

Breeds love: yet, suited as it rather is
To thought and to the climbing intellect,

It teaches less to love, than to adore;
If that be not indeed the highest love!

'Yet,' said I, tempted here to interpose, 351

'The dignity of life is not impaired
By aught that innocently satisfies

The humbler cravings of the heart; and he
Is still a happier man, who, for those heights

Of speculation not unfit, descends;
And such benign affections cultivates

Among the inferior kinds; not merely those

That he may call his own, and which depend,

As individual objects of regard, 360
Upon his care, from whom he also looks

For signs and tokens of a mutual bond;
But others, far beyond this narrow sphere,

Whom, for the very sake of love, he loves.
Nor is it a mean praise of rural life 365

And solitude, that they do favour most,
Most frequently call forth, and best sustain,

¹ See Note, p. 728

² Daniel.

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK IV

These pure sensations; that can penetrate
The obstreperous city; on the barren seas
Are not unfelt; and much might recommend,
How much they might inspirit and endear,
The loneliness of this sublime retreat!

'Yes,' said the Sage, resuming the discourse
Again directed to his downcast Friend,
'If, with the froward will and grovelling
soul

Of man, offended, liberty is here,
And invitation every hour renewed,
To mark their placid state, who never
heard

Of a command which they have power to
break,
Or rule which they are tempted to transgress:

These with a soothed or elevated heart,
May we behold; their knowledge register;
Observe their ways; and, free from envy,
find

Complacency there:—but wherefore this
to you?

I guess that, welcome to your lonely
hearth,
The redbreast, ruffled up by winter's cold
Into a "feathery bunch," feeds at your
hand:

A box, perchance, is from your casement
hung

For the small wren to build in;—not in
vain,

The barriers disregarding that surround
This deep abiding place, before your sight
Mounts on the breeze the butterfly; and
soars,

Small creature as she is, from earth's
bright flowers,

Into the dewy clouds. Ambition reigns
In the waste wilderness: the Soul ascends
Drawn towards her native firmament of
heaven,

When the fresh eagle, in the month of
May,

Upborne, at evening, on replenished wing,
This shaded valley leaves; and leaves the
dark

Empurpled hills, conspicuously renewing
A proud communication with the sun
Low sunk beneath the horizon!—List!—

I heard,
From yon huge breast of rock, a voice
sent forth

As if the visible mountain made the cry.
Again!—The effect upon the soul was
such

As he expressed: from out the mountain's
heart

The solemn voice appeared to issue,
startling

The blank air—for the region all around

Stood empty of all shape of life, and silent
Save for that single cry, the unanswer'd
bleat

Of a poor lamb—left somewhere to itself,
The plaintive spirit of the solitude!
He paused, as if unwilling to proceed,
Through consciousness that silence in
such place

Was best, the most affecting eloquence.
But soon his thoughts returned upon
themselves,

And, in soft tone of speech, thus he resumed.

'Ah! if the heart, too confidently raised,
Perchance too lightly occupied, or lulled
Too easily, despise or overlook

The vassalage that binds her to the earth,
Her sad dependence upon time, and all
The trepidations of mortality,
What place so destitute and void—but
there

The little flower her vanity shall check;
The trailing worm reprove her thoughtless
pride?

'These craggy regions, these chaotic
wilds,
Does that benignity pervade, that warms
The mole contented with her darksome
walk

In the cold ground; and to the emmet
gives
Her foresight, and intelligence that makes
The tiny creatures strong by social league;
Supports the generations, multiplies
Their tribes, till we behold a spacious
plain

Or grassy bottom, all, with little hills—
Their labour, covered, as a lake with
waves;

Thousands of cities, in the desert place
Built up of life, and food, and means of
life!

Nor wanting here, to entertain the
thought,

Creatures that in communities exist
Less, as might seem, for general guardian-
ship

Or through dependence upon mutual aid,
Than by participation of delight
And a strict love of fellowship, combined.
What other spirit can it be that prompts
The gilded summer flies to mix and weave
Their sports together in the solar beam,
Or in the gloom of twilight hum their
joy?

More obviously the self-same influence
rules

The feathered kinds; the fieldfare's pen-
sive flock,

The cawing rooks, and sea-mews from
afar,

Hovering above these inland solitudes,

By the rough wind unscattered, at whose
call

Up through the trenches of the long-
drawn vales

Their voyage was begun: nor is its power
Unfelt among the sedentary fowl 456

That seek yon pool, and there prolong
their stay

In silent congress; or together roused
Take flight; while with their clang the
air resounds.

And, over all, in that ethereal vault, 460
Is the mute company of changeable clouds;

Bright apparition, suddenly put forth,
The rainbow smiling on the faded storm;

The mild assemblage of the sterr
heavens;

And the great sun, earth's universal lord!

'How bountiful is Nature! he shall
find 466

Who seeks not; and to him, who hath
not asked,

Large measures shall be dealt. Three
sabbath-days

Are scarcely told, since, on a service bent
Of mere humanity, you clomb those
heights; 470

And what a marvellous and heavenly
show

Was suddenly revealed!—the swains
moved on,

And heeded not: you lingered, you per-
ceived

And felt, deeply as living man could feel.
There is a luxury in self-dispraise; 475

And inward self-disparagement affords
To meditative spleen a grateful feast.

Trust me, pronouncing on your own
desert,

You judge unthankfully: distempered
nerves

Infect the thoughts; the languor of the
frame 480

Depresses the soul's vigour. Quit your
couch—

Cleave not so fondly to your moody cell;
Nor let the hallowed powers, that shed
from heaven

Stillness and rest, with disapproving eye
Look down upon your taper, through a
watch 485

Of midnight hours, unseasonably twink-
ling

In this deep Hollow, like a sullen star
Dimly reflected in a lonely pool.

Take courage, and withdraw yourself
from ways

That run not parallel to nature's course.
Rise with the lark! your matins shall
obtain 491

Grace be their composition what it may,
If but with hers performed; climb once
again,

Climb every day, those ramparts; meet
the breeze

Upon their tops, adventurous as a bee
That from your garden thither soars, to
feed * 496

On new-blown heath; let yon command-
ing rock

Be your frequented watch-tower; roll the
stone

In thunder down the mountains; with all
your might

Chase the wild goat; and if the bold red
deer 500

Fly to those harbours, driven by hound
and horn

Loud echoing, add your speed to the
pursuit;

So, wearied to your hut shall you return,
And sink at evening into sound repose.'

The Solitary lifted toward the hills 505
A kindling eye:—accordant feelings
rushed

Into my bosom, whence these words
broke forth:

'Oh! what a joy it were, in vigorous
health,

To have a body (this our vital frame
With shrinking sensibility endued, 510

And all the nice regards of flesh and
blood)

And to the elements surrender it
As if it were a spirit!—How divine,

The liberty, for frail, for mortal, man 514
To roam at large among unpeopled glens

And mountainous retirements, only trod
By devious footsteps; regions consecrate

To oldest time! and, reckless of the storm
That keeps the raven quiet in her nest,

Be as a presence or a motion—one 520
Among the many there; and while the
mists

Flying, and rainy vapours, call out shapes
And phantoms from the crags and solid
earth

As fast as a musician scatters sounds
Out of an instrument; and while the
streams 525

(As at a first creation and in haste
To exercise their untried faculties)"

Descending from the region of the clouds,
And starting from the hollows of the
earth

More multitudinous every moment, rend
Their way before them—what a joy to
roam 531

An equal among mightiest energies;
And haply sometimes with articulate
voice,

Amid the deafening tumult, scarcely
heard

By him that utters it, exclaim aloud, 535
"Rage on, ye elements! let moon and
stars

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK IV

Their aspects lend, and mingle in their
turn

With this commotion (ruinous though it
be)

From day to night, from night to day,
prolonged!"

'Yes,' said the Wanderer, taking from
my lips 540

The strain of transport, 'whosoe'er in
youth

Has, through ambition of his soul, given
way

To such desires, and grasped at such
delight,

Shall feel congenial stirrings late and long,
In spite of all the weakness that life

brings, 545

Its cares and sorrows; he, though taught
to own

The tranquillizing power of time, shall
wake,

Wake sometimes to a noble restlessness—
Loving the sports which once he gloried

in.

'Compatriot, Friend, remote are
Garry's hills, 550

The streams far distant of your native
glen;

Yet is their form and image here ex-
pressed

With brotherly resemblance. Turn your
steps

Wherever fancy leads; by day, by night,
Are various engines working, not the

same 555

As those with which your soul in youth
was moved,

But by the great Artificer endowed
With no inferior power. You dwell alone;

You walk, you live, you speculate alone;
Yet doth remembrance, like a sovereign

prince, 560

For you a stately gallery maintain
Of gay or tragic pictures. You have seen,

Have acted, suffered, travelled far, ob-
served

With no incurious eye; and books are
yours,

Within whose silent chambers treasure
lies 565

Preserved from age to age; more precious
far

Than that accumulated store of gold
And orient gems, which, for a day of need,

The Sultan hides deep in ancestral tombs.
These hoards of truth you can unlock at

will: 570

And music waits upon your skilful touch,
Sounds which the wandering shepherd

from these heights
Hears, and forgets his purpose;—
furnished thus,

How can you droop, if willing to be up-
raised?

'A piteous lot it were to flee from
Man— 575

Yet not rejoice in Nature. He, whose
hours

Are by domestic pleasure uncaressed
And unenlivened; who exists whole years

Apart from benefits received or done
'Mid the transactions of the bustling

crowd; 580

Who neither hears, nor feels a wish to
hear,

Of the world's interests—such a one hath
need

Of a quick fancy and an active heart,
That, for the day's consumption, books

may yield

Food not unwholesome; earth and air
correct 585

His morbid humour, with delight sup-
plied

Or solace, varying as the seasons change.
—Truth has her pleasure-grounds, her

haunts of ease

And easy contemplation; gay parterres,
And labyrinthine walks, her sunny glades

And shady groves in studied contrast—
each, 591

For recreation, leading into each:
These may he range, if willing to partake

Their soft indulgences, and in due time
May issue thence, recruited for the tasks

And course of service Truth requires from
those 596

Who tend her altars, wait upon her
throne,

And guard her fortresses. Who thinks,
and feels,

And recognises ever and anon
The breeze of nature stirring in his soul,

Why need such man go desperately
astray, 601

And nurse "the dreadful appetite of
death"?

If tired with systems, each in its degree.
Substantial, and all crumbling in their

turn, 605

Let him build systems of his own, and
smile

At the fond work, demolished with a
touch;

If unreligious, let him be at once,
Among ten thousand innocents, enrolled

A pupil in the many-chambered school,
Where superstition weaves her airy

dreams. 616

'Life's autumn past, I stand on winter's
verge;

And daily lose what I desire to keep:
Yet rather would I instantly decline
To the traditionary sympathies

Of a most rustic ignorance, and take 615
A fearful apprehension from the owl
Or death-watch: and as readily rejoice,
If two auspicious magpies crossed my
way;—

To this would rather bend than see and
hear

The repetitions wearisome of sense, 620
Where soul is dead, and feeling hath no
place;

Where knowledge, ill begun in cold
remark

On outward things, with formal inference
ends;

Or, if the mind turn inward, she recoils
At once—or, not recoiling, is perplexed—
Lost in a gloom of uninspired research;
Meanwhile, the heart within the heart,
the seat 627

Where peace and happy consciousness
should dwell,

On its own axis restlessly revolving,
Seeks, yet can nowhere find, the light of
truth. 630

‘Upon the breast of new-created earth
Man walked; and when and wheresoe’er
he moved,

Alone or mated, solitude was not.
He heard, borne on the wind, the articu-
late voice

Of God; and Angels to his sight ap-
peared 635

Crowning the glorious hills of paradise;
Or through the groves gliding like morn-
ing mist

Enkindled by the sun. He sate—and
talked

With winged Messengers; who daily
brought

To his small island in the ethereal deep
Tidings of joy and love.—From those pure
heights 641

(Whether of actual vision, sensible
To sight and feeling, or that in this sort
Have condescendingly been shadowed
forth

Communications spiritually maintained,
And intuitions moral and divine) 646

Fell Human-kind—to banishment con-
demned

That flowing years repealed not: and
distress

And grief spread wide; but Man escaped
the doom

Of destitution;—solitude was not. 650
—Jehovah—shapeless Power above all
Powers,

Single and one, the omnipresent God,
By vocal utterance, or blaze of light,
Or cloud of darkness, localised in heaven;
On earth, enshrined within the wander-
ing ark; 655

Or, out of Zion, thundering from his throne

Between the Cherubim—on the chosen
Race

Showered miracles, and ceased not to
dispense

Judgments, that filled the land from age
to age

With hope, and love, and gratitude, and
fear; 660

And with amazement smote;—thereby
to assert

His scorned, or unacknowledged, sove-
reignty.

And when the One, ineffable of name,
Of nature indivisible, withdrew

From mortal adoration or regard, 665
Not then was Deity engulfed; nor Man,

The rational creature, left, to feel the
weight

Of his own reason, without sense or
thought

Of higher reason and a purer will,
To benefit and bless, through mightier
power:— 670

Whether the Persian—zealous to reject
Altar and image, and the inclusive walls

And roofs of temples built by human
hands—

To loftiest heights ascending, from their
tops, 674

With myrtle-wreathed tiara on his brow,
Presented sacrifice to moon and stars,

And to the winds and mother elements,
And the whole circle of the heavens, for
him

A sensitive existence, and a God,
With lifted hands invoked, and songs of
praise: 680

Or, less reluctantly to bonds of sense
Yielding his soul, the Babylonian framed

For influence undefined a personal shape;
And, from the plain, with toil immense,
upreared

Tower eight times planted on the top of
tower, 685

That Belus, nightly to his splendid couch
Descending, there might rest; upon that
height

Pure and serene, diffused—to overlook
Winding Euphrates, and the city vast

Of his devoted worshippers, far-stretched,
With grove and field and garden inter-
spersed; 691

Their town, and foodful region for sup-
port

Against the pressure of beleaguering war.

‘Chaldean Shepherds, ranging track-
less fields, 694

Beneath the concave of unclouded skies
Spread like a sea, in boundless solitude,

Looked on the polar star, as on a guide
And guardian of their course, that never
closed

His steadfast eye. The planetary Five

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK IV

With a submissive reverence they be-
held;
Watched, from the centre of their sleep-
ing flocks,
Those radiant Mercuries, that seemed to
move
Carrying through ether, in perpetual
round,
Decrees and resolutions of the Gods;
And, by their aspects, signifying works
Of dim futurity, to Man revealed. 706
—The imaginative faculty was lord
Of observations natural; and, thus
Led on, those shepherds made report of
stars
In set rotation passing to and fro, 710
Between the orbs of our apparent sphere
And its invisible counterpart, adorned
With answering constellations, under
earth,
Removed from all approach of living
sight
But present to the dead; who, so they
deemed, 715
Like those celestial messengers beheld
All accidents, and judges were of all.

'The lively Grecian, in a land of hills,
Rivers and fertile plains, and sounding
shores,—
Under a cope of sky more variable, 720
Could find commodious place for every
God,
Promptly received, as prodigally brought,
From the surrounding countries at the
choice
Of all adventurers. With unrivalled skill,
As nicest observation furnished hints
For studious fancy, his quick hand be-
stowed 726
On fluent operations a fixed shape;
Metal or stone, idolatrously served.
And yet—triumphant o'er this pompous
show
Of art, this palpable array of sense, 730
On every side encountered; in despite
Of the gross fictions chanted in the streets
By wandering Rhapsodists; and in con-
tempt
Of doubt and bold denial hourly urged
Amid the wrangling schools—a SPIRIT
hung, 735
Beautiful region! o'er thy towns and
farms,
Statues and temples, and memorial tombs;
And emanations were perceived; and acts
Of immortality, in Nature's course, 739
Exemplified by mysteries, that were felt
As bonds, on grave philosopher imposed
And armed warrior; and in every grove
A gay or pensive tenderness prevailed,
When piety more awful had relaxed.
—"Take, running river, take these locks
of mine"— 745

Thus would the Votary say—"this severed
hair,
My vow fulfilling, do I here present,
Thankful for my beloved child's return.
Thy banks, Cephissus, he again hath trod,
Thy murmurs heard; and drunk the
crystal lymph 750
With which thou dost refresh the thirsty
lip,
And, all day long, moisten these flowery
fields!"
And, doubtless, sometimes, when the hair
was shed
Upon the flowing stream, a thought arose
Of Life continuous, Being unimpaired;
That hath been, is, and where it was and
is 756
There shall endure,—existence unexposed
To the blind walk of mortal accident;
From diminution safe and weakening age;
While man grows old, and dwindles, and
decays; 760
And countless generations of mankind
Depart; and leave no vestige where they
trod.
'We live by Admiration, Hope, and
Love;
And, even as these are well and wisely
fixed,
In dignity of being we ascend. 765
But what is error?'—"Answer he who
can!"
The Sceptic somewhat haughtily ex-
claimed:
'Love, Hope, and Admiration—are they
not
Mad Fancy's favourite vassals? Does not
life 769
Use them, full oft, as pioneers to ruin,
Guides to destruction? Is it well to trust
Imagination's light when reason's fails,
The unguarded taper where the guarded
faints?
—Stoop from those heights, and soberly
declare
What error is; and, of our errors, which
Doth most debase the mind; the genuine
seats 776
Of power, where are they? Who shall
regulate,
With truth, the scale of intellectual rank?'
'Methinks,' persuasively the Sage re-
plied, 779
'That for this arduous office you possess
Some rare advantages. Your early days
A grateful recollection must supply
Of much exalted good by Heaven vouch-
safed
To dignify the humblest state.—Your
voice
Hath, in my hearing, often testified 785
That poor men's children, they, and they
alone,

By their condition taught, can understand

The wisdom of the prayer that daily asks
For daily bread. A consciousness is yours 789

How feelingly religion may be learned
In smoky cabins, from a mother's tongue—

Heard while the dwelling vibrates to the din

Of the contiguous torrent, gathering strength

At every moment—and, with strength, increase 794

Of fury; or, while snow is at the door,
Assaulting and defending, and the wind,
A sightless labourer, whistles at his work—
Fearful; but resignation tempers fear,
And piety is sweet to infant minds.

—The Shepherd-lad, that in the sunshine carves, 800

On the green turf, a dial—to divide
The silent hours; and who to that report
Can portion out his pleasures, and adapt,
Throughout a long and lonely summer's day 804

His round of pastoral duties, is not left
With less intelligence for moral things
Of gravest import. Early he perceives,
Within himself, a measure and a rule,
Which to the sun of truth he can apply,
That shines for him, and shines for all mankind. 810

Experience daily fixing his regards
On nature's wants, he knows how few
they are,

And where they lie, how answered and
appeared.

This knowledge ample recompense affords
For manifold privations; he refers 815
His notions to this standard; on this rock
Rests his desires; and hence, in after life,
Soul-strengthening patience, and sublime
content.

Imagination—not permitted here
To waste her powers, as in the worldling's
mind, 820

On fickle pleasures, and superfluous cares,
And trivial ostentation—is left free
And puissant to range the solemn walks
Of time and nature, girded by a zone
That, while it binds, invigorates and supports. 825

Acknowledge, then, that whether by the
side

Of his poor hut, or on the mountain-top,
Or in the cultured field, a Man so bred
(Take from him what you will upon the
score 829

Of ignorance or illusion) lives and breathes
For noble purposes of mind: his heart
Beats to the heroic song of ancient days;
His eye distinguishes, his soul creates.
And those illusions, which excite the scorn

Or move the pity of unthinking minds,
Are they not mainly outward ministers
Of inward conscience? with whose service
charged 837

They came and go, appeared and dis-
appear,

Diverting evil purposes, remorse
Awakening, chastening an intemperate
grief, 840

Or pride of heart abating: and, when'er
For less important ends those phantoms
move,

Who would forbid them, if their presence
serve,

On thinly-peopled mountains and wild
heaths,

Filling a space, else vacant, to exalt 845
The forms of Nature, and enlarge her
powers?

'Once more to distant ages of the world
Let us revert, and place before our
thoughts

The face which rural solitude might wear
To the unenlightened swains of pagan
Greece. 850

—In that fair clime, the lonely herdsman,
stretched

On the soft grass through half a summer's
day,

With music lulled his indolent repose:
And, in some fit of weariness, if he,
When his own breath was silent, chanced
to hear 855

A distant strain, far sweeter than the
sounds

Which his poor skill could make, his
fancy fetched,

Even from the blazing chariot of the sun,
A beardless Youth, who touched a golden
lute,

And filled the illumined groves with
ravishment. 860

The nightly hunter, lifting a bright eye
Up towards the crescent moon, with
grateful heart

Called on the lovely wanderer who be-
stowed

That timely light, to share his joyous
sport:

And hence, a beaming Goddess with her
Nymphs, 865

Across the lawn and through the dark-
some grove,

Not unaccompanied with tuneful notes
By echo multiplied from rock or cave,
Swept in the storm of chase; as moon and
stars

Glance rapidly along the clouded heaven,
When winds are blowing strong. The
traveller slaked 871

His thirst from rill or gushing fount, and
thanked

The Naiad. Sunbeams, upon distant hills

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK IV

Gliding ~~space~~, with shadows in their train,
 Might, with small help from fancy, be
 transformed 875
 Into fleet Oreads sporting visibly.
 The Zephyrs fanning, as they passed,
 their wings,
 Lacked not, for love, fair objects whom
 they wooed
 With gentle whisper. Withered boughs
 grotesque,
 Stripped of their leaves and twigs by
 hoary age, 880
 From depth of shaggy covert peeping
 forth
 In the low vale, or on steep mountain-side;
 And, sometimes, intermixed with stirring
 horns
 Of the live deer, or goat's depending
 beard,—
 These were the lurking Satyrs, a wild
 brood 885
 Of gamesome Deities; or Pan himself,
 The simple shepherd's awe-inspiring
 God!

The strain was aptly chosen; and I
 could mark
 Its kindly influence, o'er the yielding brow
 Of our Companion, gradually diffused;
 While, listening, he had paced the noise-
 less turf, 891
 Like one whose untired ear a murmuring
 stream
 Detains; but tempted now to interpose,
 He with a smile exclaimed:—
 'Tis well you speak
 At a safe distance from our native land,
 And from the mansions where our youth
 was taught. 896
 The true descendants of those godly men
 Who swept from Scotland, in a flame of
 zeal,
 Shrine, altar, image, and the massy piles
 That harboured them,—the souls retain-
 ing yet 900
 The churlish features of that after-race
 Who fled to woods, caverns, and jutting
 rocks,
 In deadly scorn of superstitious rites,
 Or what their scruples construed to be
 such—
 How, think you, would they tolerate this
 scheme 905
 Of fine propensities, that tends, if urged
 Far as it might be urged, to sow afresh
 The weeds of Romish phantasy, in vain
 Uprooted; would re-consecrate our wells
 To good Saint Fillan and to fair Saint
 Anne; 910
 And from long banishment recall Saint
 Giles,
 To watch again with tutelary love
 O'er stately Edinburgh throned on
 crags?

A blessed restoration, to behold
 The patron, on the shoulders of his priests,
 Once more parading through her crowded
 streets 916
 Now simply guarded by the sober powers
 Of science, and philosophy, and sense!
 This answer followed.—'You have
 turned my thoughts
 Upon our brave Progenitors, who rose
 Against idolatry with warlike mind, 921
 And shrunk from vain observances, to
 lurk
 In woods, and dwell under impending
 rocks
 Ill-sheltered, and oft wanting fire and
 food;
 Why?—for this very reason that they felt,
 And did acknowledge, wheresoe'er they
 moved, 926
 A spiritual presence, oft-times miscon-
 ceived,
 But still a high dependence, a divine
 Bounty and government, that filled their
 hearts
 With joy, and gratitude, and fear, and
 love; 930
 And from their fervent lips drew hymns
 of praise,
 That through the desert rang. Though
 favoured less,
 Far less, than these, yet such, in their
 degree,
 Were those bewildered Pagans of old
 time.
 Beyond their own poor natures and
 above 935
 They looked; were humbly thankful for
 the good
 Which the warm sun solicited, and earth
 Bestowed; were gladsome,—and their
 moral sense
 They fortified with reverence for the
 Gods;
 And they had hopes that overstepped the
 Grave. 940
 'Now, shall our great Discoverers,' he
 exclaimed,
 Raising his voice triumphantly, 'obtain
 From sense and reason less than these
 obtained,
 Though far misled? Shall men for whom
 our age
 Unbaffled powers of vision hath prepared,
 To explore the world without and world
 within, 946
 Be joyless as the blind? Ambitious
 spirits—
 Whom earth, at this late season, hath
 produced
 To regulate the moving spheres, and weigh
 The planets in the hollow of their hand;
 And they who rather dive than soar,
 whose pains 951

Have solved the elements, or analysed
The thinking principle—shall they in fact
Prove a degraded Race? and what avails
Renown, if their presumption make them
such? 955

Oh! there is laughter at their work in
heaven!

Enquire of ancient Wisdom; go, demand
Of mighty Nature, if 'twas ever meant
That we should pry far off yet be unraised;
That we should pore, and dwindle as we
pore, 960

Viewing all objects unremittingly
In disconnection dead and spiritless;
And still dividing, and dividing still,
Break down all grandeur, still unsatisfied
With the perverse attempt, while little-
ness 965

May yet become more little; waging thus
An impious warfare with the very life
Of our own souls!

And if indeed there be
An all-pervading Spirit, upon whom
Our dark foundations rest, could he de-
sign 970

That this magnificent effect of power,
The earth we tread, the sky that we be-
hold

By day, and all the pomp which night
reveals;

That these—and that superior mystery
Our vital frame, so fearfully devised,
And the dread soul within it—should
exist 976

Only to be examined, pondered, searched,
Probed, vexed, and criticised?—Accuse
me not

Of arrogance, unknown Wanderer as I am,
If, having walked with Nature threescore
years, 980

And offered, far as frailty would allow,
My heart a daily sacrifice to Truth.
I now affirm of Nature and of Truth,
Whom I have served, that their DIVINITY
Revolts, offended at the ways of men
Swayed by such motives, to such ends
employed; 986

Philosophers, who, though the human soul
Be of a thousand faculties composed,
And twice ten thousand interests, do yet
prize 989

This soul, and the transcendent universe,
No more than as a mirror that reflects
To proud Self-love her own intelligence;
That one, poor, finite object, in the abyss
Of infinite Being, twinkling restlessly!

'Nor higher place can be assigned to
him 995
And his compeers—the laughing Sage of
France.—

Crowned was he, if my memory do not
err,
With laurel planted upon hoary hairs,

In sign of conquest by his wit achieved
And benefits his wisdom had conferred;
His stooping body tottered with wreaths
of flowers 1001

Opprest, far less becoming ornaments
Than Spring oft twines about a moulder-
ing tree;

Yet so it pleased a fond, a vain, old Man,
And a most frivolous people. Him I
mean 1005

'Who penned, to ridicule confiding faith,
'This sorry Legend; which by chance we
found

Piled in a nook, through malice, as might
seem,

Among more innocent rubbish.'—Speak-
ing thus,

With a brief notice when, and how, and
where, 1010

We had espied the book, he drew it forth;
And courteously, as if the act removed,
At once, all traces from the good Man's
heart

Of unbenign aversion or contempt, 1014
Restored it to its owner. 'Gentle Friend,'
Herewith he grasped the Solitary's hand,
'You have known lights and guides better
than these.

Ah! let not aught amiss within dispose
A noble mind to practise on herself, 1019
And tempt opinion to support the wrongs
Of passion: whatsoe'er be felt or feared,
From higher judgment-seats make no ap-
peal

To lower: can you question that the soul
Inherits an allegiance, not by choice
To be cast off, upon an oath proposed
By each new upstart notion? In the
ports 1026

Of levity no refuge can be found,
No shelter, for a spirit in distress.
He, who by wilful disesteem of life
And proud insensibility to hope, 1030
Affronts the eye of Solitude, shall learn
That her mild nature can be terrible;
That neither she nor Silence lack the
power

To avenge their own insulted majesty.

'O blest seclusion! when the mind
admits 1035

The law of duty; and can therefore move
Through each vicissitude of loss and gain,
Linked in entire complacency with her
choice;

When youth's presumptuousness is mel-
lowed down,

And manhood's vain anxiety dismissed;
When wisdom shows her seasonable
fruit, 1041

Upon the boughs of sheltering leisure
hung

In sober plenty; when the spirit stoops
To drink with gratitude the crystal stream

Of unimproved enjoyment; and is pleased
To muse, and be saluted by the air 1046
Of meek repentance, wafting wallflower
scents

From out the crumbling ruins of fallen
pride

And chambers of transgression, now for-
lorn.

O, calm contented days, and peaceful
nights! 1050

Who, when such good can be obtained,
would strive

To reconcile his manhood to a couch
Soft, as may seem, but, under that dis-
guise,

Stuffed with the thorny substance of the
past

For fixed annoyance; and full oft be-
set 1055

With floating dreams, black and dis-
consolate,

The vapoury phantoms of futurity?

‘Within the soul a faculty abides,
That with interpositions, which would
hide

And darken, so can deal that they be-
come 1060

Contingencies of pomp; and serve to
exalt

Her native brightness. As the ample
moon,

In the deep stillness of a summer even
Rising behind a thick and lofty grove,

Burns, like an unconsuming fire of light,
In the green trees; and, kindling on all
sides 1066

Their leafy umbrage, turns the dusky
veil

Into a substance glorious as her own,
Yea, with her own incorporated, by

power
Capacious and serene. Like power
abides 1070

In man’s celestial spirit; virtue thus
Sets forth and magnifies herself; thus

feeds
A calm, a beautiful, and silent fire,
From the encumbrances of mortal life,

From error, disappointment—nay, from
guilt; 1075

And sometimes, so relenting justice wills,
From palpable oppressions of despair.’

The Solitary by these words was
touched

With manifest emotion, and exclaimed;
‘But how begin? and whence?’—“The

Mind is free— 1080

Resolve,” the haughty Moralist would
say,

“This single act is all that we demand.”
Alas! such wisdom bids a creature fly

Whose very sorrow is, that time hath
shorn

His natural wings!—To friendship let
him turn 1085

For succour; but perhaps he sits alone
On stormy waters, tossed in a little boat

That holds but him, and can contain no
more!

Religion tells of amity sublime
Which no condition can preclude; of

One 1090

Who sees all suffering, comprehends all
wants,

All weakness fathoms, can supply all
needs:

But is that bounty absolute?—His gifts,
Are they not, still, in some degree, rewards

For acts of service? Can his love ex-
tend 1095

To hearts that own not him? Will showers
of grace,

When in the sky no promise may be seen,
Fall to refresh a parched and withered

land?
Or shall the groaning Spirit cast her load
At the Redeemer’s feet?’

In rueful tone, 1100

With some impatience in his mien, he
spake:

Back to my mind rushed all that had been
urged

To calm the Sufferer when his story
closed;

I looked for counsel as unbending now;
But a discriminating sympathy 1105

Stooped to this apt reply:—
‘As men from men

Do, in the constitution of their souls,
Differ, by mystery not to be explained;

And as we fall by various ways, and sink
One deeper than another, self-condemned

Through manifold degrees of guilt and
shame; 1111

So manifold and various are the ways
Of restoration, fashioned to the steps

Of all infirmity, and tending all
To the same point, attainable by all— 1115

Peace in ourselves, and union with our
God.

For you, assuredly, a hopeful road
Lies open: we have heard from you a

voice
At every moment softened in its course
By tenderness of heart; have seen your

eye, 1120

Even like an altar lit by fire from heaven,
Kindle before us.—Your discourse this

day,
That, like the fabled Lethe, wished to
flow

In creeping sadness, through oblivious
shades

Of death and night, has caught at every
turn 1125

The colours of the sun. Access for you
Is yet preserved to principles of truth,

Which the imaginative Will upholds
In seats of wisdom, not to be approached
By the inferior Faculty that moulds, 1130
With her minute and speculative pains,
Opinion, ever changing!

I have seen
A curious child, who dwelt upon a tract
Of inland ground, applying to his ear
The convolutions of a smooth-lipped
shell; 1135

To which, in silence hushed, his very soul
Listened intensely; and his countenance
soon

Brightened with joy; for from within
were heard

Murmurings, whereby the monitor ex-
pressed

Mysterious union with its native sea. 1140
Even such a shell the universe itself

Is to the ear of Faith; and there are times,
I doubt not, when to you it doth impart
Authentic tidings of invisible things;

Of ebb and flow, and ever-during power;
And central peace, subsisting at the
heart 1146

Of endless agitation. Here you stand,
Adore, and worship, when you know it
not;

Pious beyond the intention of your
thought;

Devout above the meaning of your will.
—Yes, you have felt, and may not cease
to feel. 1151

The estate of man would be indeed forlorn
If false conclusions of the reasoning power
Made the eye blind, and closed the
passages

Through which the ear converses with the
heart. 1155

Has not the soul, the being of your life,
Received a shock of awful consciousness,
In some calm season, when these lofty
rocks

At night's approach bring down the un-
clouded sky, 1159

To rest upon their circumambient walls;
A temple framing of dimensions vast,
And yet not too enormous for the sound
Of human anthems,—choral song, or
burst

Sublime of instrumental harmony,
To glorify the Eternal! What if these 1165

Did never break the stillness that prevails
Here,—if the solemn nightingale be mute,
And the soft woodlark here did never
chant

Her vespers,—Nature fails not to pro-
vide

Impulse and utterance. The whispering
air 1170

Sends inspiration from the shadowy
heights,

And blind recesses of the caverned rocks;
The little rills, and waters numberless,

Inaudible by daylight, blend their notes
With the loud streams: and often, at the
hour 1175

When issue forth the first pale stars, is
heard,

Within the circuit of this fabric huge,
One voice—the solitary raven, flying
Athwart the concave of the dark blue
dome,

Unseen, perchance above all power of
sight— 1180

An iron knell! with echoes from afar
Faint—and still fainter—as the cry, with
which

The wanderer accompanies her flight
Through the calm region, fades upon the
ear,

Diminishing by distance till it seemed
To expire; yet from the abyss is caught
again, 1186

And yet again recovered!

But descending
From these imaginative heights, that
yield

Far-stretching views into eternity,
Acknowledge that to Nature's humbler
power 1190

Your cherished sullenness is forced to
bend

Even here, where her amenities are sown
With sparing hand. Then trust yourself
abroad

To range her blooming bowers, and spa-
cious fields, 1194

Where on the labours of the happy throng
She smiles, including in her wide embrace
City, and town, and tower,—and sea with
ships

Sprinkled;—be our Companion while we
track

Her rivers populous with gliding life;
While, free as air, o'er printless sands we
march, 1200

Or pierce the gloom of her majestic woods;
Roaming, or resting under grateful shade
In peace and meditative cheerfulness;

Where living things, and things inani-
mate,

Do speak, at Heaven's command, to eye
and ear, 1205

And speak to social reason's inner sense,
With inarticulate language.

For, the Man—
Forms

Of nature, who with understanding heart
Both knows and loves such objects as
excite 1210

No morbid passions, no disquietude,
No vengeance, and no hatred—needs must
feel

The joy of that pure principle of love
So deeply, that, unsatisfied with aught
Less pure and exquisite, he cannot choose

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK IV

But seek for objects of a kindred love
In fellow-natures and a kindred joy.
Accordingly he by degrees perceives
His feelings of aversion softened down;
A holy tenderness pervade his frame. 1220
His sanity of reason not impaired,
Say rather, all his thoughts now flowing
clear,
From a clear fountain flowing, he looks
round
And seeks for good; and finds the good
he seeks:
Until abhorrence and contempt are
things 1225
He only knows by name; and, if he hear,
From other mouths, the language which
they speak,
He is compassionate; and has no thought,
No feeling, which can overcome his love.

'And further; by contemplating these
Forms 1230
In the relations which they bear to man,
He shall discern, how, through the various
means
Which silently they yield, are multiplied
The spiritual presences of absent things.
Trust me, that for the instructed, time
will come 1235
When they shall meet no object but may
teach
Some acceptable lesson to their minds
Of human suffering, or of human joy.
So shall they learn, while all things speak
of man,
Their duties from all forms; and general
laws, 1240
And local accidents, shall tend alike
To rouse, to urge; and, with the will,
confer
The ability to spread the blessings wide
Of true philanthropy. The light of love
Not failing, perseverance from their steps
Departing not, for them shall be con-
firmed 1246
The glorious habit by which sense is made
Subservient still to moral purposes,
Auxiliary to divine. That change shall
clothe
The naked spirit, ceasing to deplore 1250
The burthen of existence. Science then
Shall be a precious visitant; and then,
And only then, be worthy of her name:
For then her heart shall kindle; her dull
eye, 1254
Dull and inanimate, no more shall hang
Chained to its object in brute slavery;
But taught with patient interest to watch
The processes of things, and serve the
cause
Of order and distinctness, not for this
Shall it forget that its most noble use,
Its most illustrious province, must be
found 1261

In furnishing clear guidance, a support
Not treacherous, to the mind's *excursive*
power.
—So build we up the Being that we are;
Thus deeply drinking-in the soul of
things, 1265
We shall be wise perforce; and, while
inspired
By choice, and conscious that the Will is
free,
Shall move unswerving, even as if im-
pelled
By strict necessity, along the path 1269
Of order and of good. Whate'er we see,
Or feel, shall tend to quicken and refine;
Shall fix, in calmer seats of moral strength,
Earthly desires; and raise, to loftier
heights
Of divine love, our intellectual soul.'

Here closed the Sage that eloquent
harangue, 1275
Poured forth with fervour in continuous
stream,
Such as, remote, 'mid savage wilderness,
An Indian Chief discharges from his
breast
Into the hearing of assembled tribes, 1279
In open circle seated round, and hushed
As the unbreathing air, when not a leaf
Stirs in the mighty woods.—So did he
speak:
The words he uttered shall not pass away
Dispersed, like music that the wind takes
up
By snatches, and lets fall, to be for-
gotten; 1285
No—they sank into me, the bounteous
gift
Of one whom time and nature had made
wise.
Gracing his doctrine with authority
Which hostile spirits silently allow;
Of one accustomed to desires that feed
On fruitage gathered from the tree of
life; 1291
To hopes on knowledge and experience
built;
Of one in whom persuasion and belief
Had ripened into faith, and faith become
A passionate intuition; whence the Soul,
Though bound to earth by ties of pity
and love, 1296
From all injurious servitude was free.

The Sun, before his place of rest were
reached,
Had yet to travel far, but unto us,
To us who stood low in that hollow
dell, 1300
He had become invisible,—a pomp
Leaving behind of yellow radiance spread
Over the mountain-sides, in contrast bold
With ample shadows, seemingly, no less

Than those resplendent lights, his rich
bequest; 1305
A dispensation of his evening power.
—Adown the path that from the glen had
led
The funeral train, the Shepherd and his
Mate
Were seen descending:—forth to greet
them ran
Our little Pair: the rustic pair approach;
And in the Matron's countenance may be
read 1311
Plain indication that the words, which
told
How that neglected Pensioner was sent
Before his time into a quiet grave,

Had done to her humanity no wrong: 1315
But we are kindly welcomed—promptly
served
With ostentatious zeal.—Along the floor
Of the small Cottage in the lonely Dell
A grateful couch was spread for our re-
pose;
Where, in the guise of mountaineers, we
lay, 1320
Stretched upon fragrant heath, and lulled
by sound
Of far-off torrents charming the still
night,
And, to tired limbs and over-busy
thoughts,
Inviting sleep and soft forgetfulness.

BOOK FIFTH

THE PASTOR

ARGUMENT

Farewell to the Valley.—Reflections.—A large and populous Vale described.—The Pastor's Dwelling, and some account of him.—Church and Monuments.—The Solitary musing, and where.—Roused.—In the Churchyard the Solitary communicates the thoughts which had recently passed through his mind.—Lofty tone of the Wanderer's discourse of yesterday adverted to.—Rite of Baptism, and the professions accompanying it, contrasted with the real state of human life.—Apology for the Rite.—Inconsistency of the best men.—Acknowledgment that practice falls far below the injunctions of duty as existing in the mind.—General complaint of a falling-off in the value of life after the time of youth.—Outward appearances of content and happiness in degree illusive.—Pastor approaches.—Appeal made to him.—His answer.—Wanderer in sympathy with him.—Suggestion that the least ambitious enquirers may be most free from error.—The Pastor is desired to give some portraits of the living or dead from his own observation of life among these Mountains—and for what purpose.—Pastor consents.—Mountain cottage.—Excellent qualities of its Inhabitants.—Solitary expresses his pleasure; but denies the praise of virtue to worth of this kind.—Feelings of the Priest before he enters upon his account of persons interred in the Churchyard.—Graves of unbaptized Infants.—Funeral and sepulchral observances, whence.—Ecclesiastical Establishments, whence derived.—Profession of belief in the doctrine of Immortality.

'FAREWELL, deep Valley, with thy one
rude House,
And its small lot of life-supporting fields,
And guardian rocks!—Farewell, attrac-
tive seat!
To the still influx of the morning light
Open, and day's pure cheerfulness, but
veiled 5
From human observation, as if yet
Primeval forests wrapped thee round with
dark
Impenetrable shade; once more farewell,
Majestic circuit, beautiful abyss,
By Nature destined from the birth of
things 10
For quietness profound!'
Upon the side
Of that brown ridge, sole outlet of the
vale
Which foot of boldest stranger would
attempt,
Lingering behind my comrades, thus I
breathed 14
A parting tribute to a spot that seemed
Like the fixed centre of a troubled world.

Again I halted with reverted eyes;
The chain that would not slacken, was at
length
Snapt,—and, pursuing leisurely my way,
How vain, thought I, is it by change of
place 20
To seek that comfort which the mind
denies;
Yet trial and temptation oft are shunned
Wisely; and by such tenure do we hold
Frail life's possessions, that even they
whose fate
Yields no peculiar reason of complaint 25
Might, by the promise that is here, be
won
To steal from active duties, and embrace
Obscurity, and undisturbed repose.
—Knowledge, methinks, in these disor-
dered times,
Should be allowed a privilege to have 30
Her anchorites, like piety of old;
Men, who, from faction sacred, and un-
stained
By war, might, if so minded, turn aside
Uncensured, and subsist, a scattered few

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK V

Living to God and nature, and content
With that communion. Consecrated be
The spots where such abide! But happier
still

The Man, whom, furthermore, a hope
attends

That meditation and research may guide
His privacy to principles and powers 40
Discovered or invented; or set forth,
Through his acquaintance with the ways
of truth,

In lucid order; so that, when his course
Is run, some faithful eulogist may say,
He sought not praise, and praise did over-
look 45

His unobtrusive merit; but his life,
Sweet to himself, was exercised in good
That shall survive his name and memory.

Acknowledgments of gratitude sincere
Accompanied these musings; fervent
thanks 50

For my own peaceful lot and happy
choice;

A choice that from the passions of the
world

Withdrew, and fixed me in a still retreat;
Sheltered, but not to social duties lost,
Secluded, but not buried; and with song
Cheering my days, and with industrious
thought; 56

With the ever-welcome company of
books;

With virtuous friendship's soul-sustaining
aid,

And with the blessings of domestic love.

Thus occupied in mind I paced along,
Following the rugged road, by sledge or
wheel 61

Worn in the moorland, till I overtook
My two Associates, in the morning sun-
shine

Halting together on a rocky knoll,
Whence the bare road descended rapidly
To the green meadows of another vale.

Here did our pensive Host put forth his
hand 67

In sign of farewell. 'Nay,' the old Man
said,

'The fragrant air its coolness still retains;
The herds and flocks are yet abroad to
crop 70

The dewy grass; you cannot leave us now,
We must not part at this inviting hour.'
He yielded, though reluctant; for his
mind

Instinctively disposed him to retire 74
To his own covert; as a billow, heaved
Upon the beach, rolls back into the sea.
—So we descend: and winding round a
rock

Attain a point that showed the valley—
stretched

In length before us; and, not distant
far,

Upon a rising ground a grey church-
tower, 80

Whose battlements were screened by
tufted trees.

And towards a crystal Mere, that lay
beyond

Among steep hills and woods embosomed,
flowed

A copious stream with boldly-winding
course;

Here traceable, there hidden—there again
To sight restored, and glittering in the
sun. 86

On the stream's bank, and everywhere,
appeared

Fair dwellings, single, or in social knots;
Some scattered o'er the level, others
perched

On the hill-sides, a cheerful quiet scene,
Now in its morning purity arrayed. 91

'As 'mid some happy valley of the
Alps,'

Said I, 'once happy, ere tyrannic power,
Wantonly breaking in upon the Swiss,
Destroyed their unoffending common-
wealth, 95

A popular equality reigns here,
Save for yon stately House beneath whose
roof

A rural lord might dwell.'—'No feudal
pomp,

Or power,' replied the Wanderer, 'to
that House

Belongs, but there in his allotted Home
Abides, from year to year, a genuine
Priest, 101

The shepherd of his flock; or, as a king
Is styled, when most affectionately
praised,

The father of his people. Such is he;
And rich and poor, and young and old,
rejoice 105

Under his spiritual sway. He hath vouch-
safed

To me some portion of a kind regard;
And something also of his inner mind
Hath he imparted—but I speak of him
As he is known to all.

The calm delights 110
Of unambitious piety he chose,

And learning's solid dignity; though born
Of knightly race, nor wanting powerful
friends.

Hither, in prime of manhood, he with-
drew

From academic bowers. He loved the
spot— 115

Who does not love his native soil?—he
prized

The ancient rural character, composed
Of simple manners, feelings unsuppressed

And undisguised, and strong and serious thought;

A character reflected in himself, 120
With such embellishment as well befits
His rank and sacred function. This deep
vale

Winds far in reaches hidden from our sight,

And one a turreted manorial hall
Adorns, in which the good Man's an-
cestors 125

Have dwelt through ages—Patrons of
this Cure.

To them, and to his own judicious pains,
The Vicar's dwelling, and the whole
domain,

Owes that presiding aspect which might
well

Attract your notice; statelier than could
else 130

Have been bestowed, through course of
common chance,

On an unwealthy mountain Benefice.'

This said, oft pausing, we pursued our
way;

Nor reached the village-churchyard till
the sun

Travelling at steadier pace than ours, had
risen 135

Above the summits of the highest hills,
And round our path darted oppressive
beams.

As chanced, the portals of the sacred
Pile

Stood open; and we entered. On my
frame,

At such transition from the fervid air, 140
A grateful coolness fell, that seemed to
strike

The heart, in concert with that temperate
awe

And natural reverence which the place
inspired.

Not raised in nice proportions was the
pile, 144

But large and massy; for duration built;
With pillars crowded, and the roof up-
held

By naked rafters intricately crossed,
Like leafless underboughs, in some thick
wood,

All withered by the depth of shade above.
Admonitory texts inscribed the walls, 150

Each, in its ornamental scroll, enclosed;
Each also crowned with winged heads—
a pair

Of rudely-painted Cherubim. The floor
Of nave and aisle, in unpretending guise,

Was occupied by oaken benches ranged
In seemly rows; the chancel only showed

Some vain distinctions, marks of earthly
state 157

By immemorial privilege allowed;
Though with the Encincture's special
sanctity

But ill according. An heraldic shield,
Varying its tincture with the changeful
light, 161

Imbued the altar-window; fixed aloft
A faded hatchment hung, and one by
time

Yet undiscoloured. A capacious pew
Of sculptured oak stood here, with drapery
lined; 165

And marble monuments were here dis-
played

Thronging the walls; and on the floor
beneath

Sepulchral stones appeared, with emblems
graven

And foot-worn epitaphs, and some with
small

And shining effigies of brass inlaid. 170

The tribute by these various records
claimed,

Duly we paid, each after each, and read
The ordinary chronicle of birth,

Office, alliance, and promotion—all
Ending in dust; of upright magistrates,

Grave doctors strenuous for the mother-
church, 176

And uncorrupted senators, alike
To king and people true. A brazen plate,

Not easily deciphered, told of one
Whose course of earthly honour was be-
gun 180

In quality of page among the train
Of the eighth Henry, when he crossed the
seas

His royal state to show, and prove his
strength

In tournament, upon the fields of France.
Another tablet registered the death, 185

And praised the gallant bearing, of a
Knight

Tried in the sea-fights of the second
Charles.

Near this brave Knight his Father lay
entombed;

And, to the silent language giving voice,
I read,—how in his manhood's earlier
day 190

He, 'mid the afflictions of intestine war
And rightful government subverted, found

One only solace—that he had espoused
A virtuous Lady tenderly beloved

For her benign perfections; and yet
more 195

Endeared to him, for this, that, in her
state

Of wedlock richly crowned with Heaven's
regard,

She with a numerous issue filled his house,
Who thrive, like plants, uninjured by the
storm

THE EXCURSION

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That laid their country waste. No need
to speak 200

Of less particular notices assigned
To Youth or Maiden gone before their
time,

And Matrons and unwedded Sisters old;
Whose charity and goodness were re-
hearsed

In modest panegyric. 'These dim lines, 205

What would they tell?' said I,—but, from
the task

Of puzzling out that faded narrative,
With whisper soft my venerable Friend
Called me; and, looking down the dark-
some aisle,

I saw the Tenant of the lonely vale 210
Standing apart; with curv'd arm reclined

On the baptismal font; his pallid face
Upright, as if his mind were rapt, or
lost

In some abstraction;—gracefully he
stood,

The semblance bearing of a sculptured
form 215

That leans upon a monumental urn
In peace, from morn to night, from year
to year.

Him from that posture did the Sexton
rouse;

Who entered, humming carelessly a tune,
Continuation haply of the notes 220

That had beguiled the work from which
he came,

With spade and mattock o'er his shoulder
hung;

To be deposited, for future need,
In their appointed place. The pale Re-
cluse

Withdrew; and straight we followed,—
to a spot 225

Where sun and shade were intermixed;
for there

A broad oak, stretching forth its leafy arms
From an adjoining pasture, overhung

Small space of that green churchyard
with a light

And pleasant awning. On the moss-
grown wall 230

My ancient Friend and I together took
Our seats; and thus the Solitary spake,
Standing before us:—

'Did you note the mien
Of that self-solaced, easy-hearted churl,

Death's hireling, who scoops out his
neighbour's grave, 235

Or wraps an old acquaintance up in
clay,

All unconcerned as he would bind a sheaf,
Or plant a tree. And did you hear his
voice?

I was abruptly summoned by the sound
From some affecting images and thoughts, 240

Which then were silent; but crave utter-
ance now. 241

'Much,' he continued, with dejected
look,

'Much, yesterday, was said in glowing
phrase

Of our sublime dependencies, and hopes
For future states of being; and the wings

Of speculation, joyfully outspread, 246
Hovered above our destiny on earth:

But stoop, and place the prospect of the
soul

In sober contrast with reality,
And man's substantial life. If this mute

earth 250
Of what it holds could speak, and every

grave

Were as a volume, shut, yet capable
Of yielding its contents to eye and ear,

We should recoil, stricken with sorrow
and shame,

To see disclosed, by such dread proof,
how ill 255

That which is done accords with what
is known

To reason, and by conscience is enjoined;
How idly, how perversely, life's whole

course,
To this conclusion, deviates from the line,
Or of the end stops short, proposed to all

At her aspiring outset. Mark the babe 261

Not long accustomed to this breathing
world;

One that hath barely learned to shape
a smile,

Though yet irrational of soul, to grasp
With tiny finger—to let fall a tear; 265

And, as the heavy cloud of sleep dis-
solves,

To stretch his limbs, bemocking, as might
seem,

The outward functions of intelligent man;
A grave proficient in amusive feats

Of puppetry, that from the lap declare
His expectations, and announce his 271

claims
To that inheritance which millions rue
That they were ever born to! In due

time

A day of solemn ceremonial comes;
When they, who for this Minor hold in

trust 275
Rights that transcend the loftiest heritage
Of mere humanity, present their Charge,

For this occasion daintily adorned,
At the baptismal font. And when the

pure
And consecrating element hath cleansed
The original stain, the child is there

received 281

Into the second ark, Christ's church,
with trust

That he, from wrath redeemed, therein
shall float
Over the billows of this troublesome
world

To the fair land of everlasting life. 285
Corrupt affections, covetous desires,
Are all renounced; high as the thought
of man

Can carry virtue, virtue is professed;
A dedication made, a promise given
For due provision to control and guide,
And unremitting progress to ensure 291
In holiness and truth.

'You cannot blame,'
Here interposing fervently I said,
'Rites which attest that Man by nature
lies

Bedded for good and evil in a gulf 295
Fearfully low; nor will your judgment
scorn

Those services, whereby attempt is made
To lift the creature toward that eminence
On which, now fallen, erewhile in majesty
He stood; or if not so, whose top serene
At least he feels 'tis given him to descry;
Not without aspirations, evermore 302
Returning, and injunctions from within
Doubt to cast off and weariness; in trust
That what the Soul perceives, if glory
lost, 305

May be, through pains and persevering
hope,
Recovered; or, if hitherto unknown,
Lies within reach, and one day shall be
gained.'

'I blame them not,' he calmly answered
—'no; 309

The outward ritual and established forms
With which communities of men invest
These inward feelings, and the aspiring
vows

To which the lips give public utterance
Are both a natural process; and by me
Shall pass uncensured; though the issue
prove, 315

Bringing from age to age its own reproach,
Incongruous, impotent, and blank.—But,
oh!

If to be weak is to be wretched—miser-
able,

As the lost Angel by a human voice
Hath mournfully pronounced, then, in
my mind, 320

Far better not to move at all than move
By impulse sent from such illusive
power,—

That finds and cannot fasten down; that
grasps

And is rejoiced, and loses while it grasps;
That tempts, emboldens—for a time
sustains, 325

And then betrays; accuses and inflicts
Remorseless punishment; and so retreads

The inevitable circle: better far
Than this, to graze the herb in thought-
less peace,
By foresight, or remembrance, undis-
turbed! 330

'Philosophy! and thou more vaunted
name

Religion! with thy statelier retinue,
Faith, Hope, and Charity—from the
visible world
Choose for your emblems whatsoe'er ye
find

Of safest guidance or of firmest trust—
The torch, the star, the anchor; nor
except 336

The cross itself, at whose unconscious
feet

The generations of mankind have knelt
Ruefully seized, and shedding bitter tears,
And through that conflict seeking rest—
of you, 340

High-titled Powers, am I constrained to
ask,

Here standing, with the unvoyageable sky
In faint reflection of infinitude
Stretched overhead, and at my pensive
feet

A subterranean magazine of bones, 345
In whose dark vaults my own shall soon
be laid,

Where are your triumphs? your dominion
where?

And in what age admitted and con-
firmed?

—Not for a happy land do I enquire,
Island or grove, that hides a blessed few
Who, with obedience willing and sincere,
To your serene authorities conform;
But whom, I ask, of individual Souls,
Have ye withdrawn from passion's
crooked ways,

Inspired, and thoroughly fortified?—If
the heart 355

Could be inspected to its inmost folds
By sight undazzled with the glare of
praise,

Who shall be named—in the resplendent
line

Of sages, martyrs, confessors—the man
Whom the best might of faith, wherever
fixed, 360

For one day's little compass, has pre-
served

From painful and discreditable shocks
Of contradiction, from some vague de-
sire

Culpably cherished, or corrupt relapse
To some unsanctioned fear?'

'If this be so, 365
And Man,' said I, 'be in his noblest shape
Thus pitiaably infirm; then, he who made
And who shall judge the creature, will
forgive.

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—Yet, in its general tenor, your complaint
Is all too true; and surely not misplaced: 370
For, from this pregnant spot of ground, such thoughts
Rise to the notice of a serious mind
By natural exhalation. With the dead
In their repose, the living in their mirth,
Who can reflect, unmoved, upon the round 375
Of smooth and solemnized complacencies,
By which, on Christian lands, from age to age
Profession mocks performance? Earth is sick,
And Heaven is weary, of the hollow words
Which States and Kingdoms utter when they talk 380
Of truth and justice. Turn to private life
And social neighbourhood; look we to ourselves;
A light of duty shines on every day
For all; and yet how few are warmed or cheered!
How few who mingle with their fellow-men 385
And still remain self-governed, and apart,
Like this our honoured Friend; and thence acquire
Right to expect his vigorous decline,
That promises to the end a blest old age!'

'Yet,' with a smile of triumph thus exclaimed 390
The Solitary, 'in the life of man,
If to the poetry of common speech
Faith may be given, we see as in a glass
A true reflection of the circling year,
With all its seasons. Grant that Spring is there, 395
In spite of many a rough untoward blast,
Hopeful and promising with buds and flowers;
Yet where is glowing Summer's long rich day,
That ought to follow faithfully expressed?
And mellow Autumn, charged with bounteous fruit, 400
Where is she imaged? in what favoured clime
Her lavish pomp, and ripe magnificence?
—Yet, while the better part is missed, the worse
In man's autumnal season is set forth
With a resemblance not to be denied, 405
And that contents him; bowers that hear no more
The voice of gladness, less and less supply
Of outward sunshine and internal warmth;
And, with this change, sharp air and falling leaves, 409
Foretelling aged Winter's desolate sway.

'How gay the habitations that bedeck
This fertile valley! Not a house but seems
To give assurance of content within;
Embosomed happiness, and placid love;
As if the sunshine of the day were met
With answering brightness in the hearts of all 416
Who walk this favoured ground. But chance-regards,
And notice forced upon incurious ears;
These, if these only, acting in despite
Of the encomiums by my Friend pronounced 420
On humble life, forbid the judging mind
To trust the smiling aspect of this fair
And noiseless commonwealth. The simple race
Of mountaineers (by nature's self removed
From foul temptations, and by constant care 425
Of a good shepherd tended, as themselves
Do tend their flocks) partake man's general lot
With little mitigation. They escape,
Perchance, the heavier woes of guilt; feel not
The tedium of fantastic idleness: 430
Yet life, as with the multitude, with them
Is fashioned like an ill-constructed tale;
That on the outset wastes its gay desires,
Its fair adventures, its enlivening hopes,
And pleasant interests—for the sequel leaving 435
Old things repeated with diminished grace;
And all the laboured novelties at best
Imperfect substitutes, whose use and power
Evince the want and weakness whence they spring.'

While in this serious mood we held discourse, 440
The reverend Pastor toward the church-yard gate
Approached; and, with a mild respectful air
Of native cordiality, our Friend
Advanced to greet him. With a gracious mien
Was he received, and mutual joy prevailed. 445
Awhile they stood in conference, and I guess
That he, who now upon the mossy wall
Sate by my side, had vanished, if a wish
Could have transferred him to the flying clouds,
Or the least penetrable hiding-place 450
In his own valley's rocky guardianship.
—For me, I looked upon the pair, well pleased:
Nature had framed them both, and both were marked

By circumstance, with intermixture fine
Of contrast and resemblance. To an oak
Hardy and grand, a weather-beaten oak,
Fresh in the strength and majesty of age,
One might be likened: flourishing ap-
peared,
Though somewhat past the fulness of his
prime,
The other—like a stately sycamore, 460
That spreads, in gentle pomp, its honied
shade.

A general greeting was exchanged;
and soon
The Pastor learned that his approach had
given
A welcome interruption to discourse
Grave, and in truth too often sad.—‘Is
Man 465

A child of hope? Do generations press
On generations, without progress made?
Halts the individual, ere his hairs be grey,
Perforce? Are we a creature in whom
good

Preponderates, or evil? Doth the will
Acknowledge reason’s law? A living
power 471

Is virtue, or no better than a name,
Fleeting as health or beauty, and un-
sound?

So that the only substance which remains,
(For thus the tenour of complaint hath
run) 475

Among so many shadows, are the pains
And penalties of miserable life,
Doomed to decay, and then expire in
dust!

—Our cogitations this way have been
drawn,

These are the points,’ the Wanderer said,
‘on which 480

Our inquest turns.—Accord, good Sir!
the light

Of your experience to dispel this gloom:
By your persuasive wisdom shall the
heart

That frets, or languishes, be stilled and
cheered.’

‘Our nature,’ said the Priest, in mild
reply, 485

‘Angels may weigh and fathom: they
perceive,

With undisturbed and unclouded spirit,
The object as it is; but, for ourselves,
That speculative height we may not reach.
The good and evil are our own; and we
Are that which we would contemplate
from far. 491

Knowledge, for us, is difficult to gain—
Is difficult to gain, and hard to keep—
As virtue’s self; like virtue is beset
With snares; tried, tempted, subject to
decay. 495

Love, admiration, fear, desire, and hate,
Blind were we without these: through
these alone

Are capable to notice or discern
Or to record; we judge, but cannot be
Indifferent judges. ‘Spite of proudest
boast, 500

Reason, best reason, is to imperfect man
An effort only, and a noble aim;
A crown, an attribute of sovereign power,
Still to be courted—never to be won.

—Look forth, or each man dive into him-
self; 505

What sees he but a creature too per-
turbed;

That is transported to excess; that yearns,
Regrets, or trembles, wrongly, or too
much;

Hopes rashly, in disgust as rash recoils;
Battens on spleen, or moulders in despair?
Thus comprehension fails, and truth is
missed; 511

Thus darkness and delusion round our
path

Spread, from disease, whose subtle injury
lurks

Within the very faculty of sight. 514

‘Yet for the general purposes of faith
In Providence, for solace and support,
We may not doubt that who can best
subject

The will to reason’s law, can strictliest
live

And act in that obedience, he shall gain
The clearest apprehension of those
truths, 520

Which unassisted reason’s utmost power
Is too infirm to reach. But, waiving this,
And our regards confining within bounds
Of less exalted consciousness, through
which

The very multitude are free to range, 525
We safely may affirm that human life

Is either fair and tempting, a soft scene
Grateful to sight, refreshing to the soul,
Or a forbidding tract of cheerless view;
Even as the same is looked at, or ap-
proached. 530

Thus, when in changeful April fields are
white

With new-fallen snow, if from the sullen
north

Your walk conduct you hither, ere the
sun

Hath gained his noontide height, this
churchyard, filled

With mounds transversely lying side by
side 535

From east to west, before you will ap-
pear

An unilluminated, blank, and dreary, plain,
With more than wintry cheerlessness and
gloom

THE EXCURSION

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Saddening the heart. Go forward, and
look back;

Look, from the quarter whence the lord
of light, 540

Of life, of love, and gladness doth dis-
pense

His beams; which, unexcluded in their fall,
Upon the southern side of every grave

Have gently exercised a melting power;
Then will a vernal prospect greet your eye,

All fresh and beautiful, and green and
bright, 546

Hopeful and cheerful:—vanished is the
pall

That overspread and chilled the sacred
turf,

Vanished or hidden; and the whole
domain,

To some, too lightly minded, might ap-
pear 550

A meadow carpet for the dancing hours.
—This contrast, not unsuitable to life,

Is to that other state more apposite,
Death and its two-fold aspect! wintry—
one,

Cold, sullen, blank, from hope and joy
shut out; 555

The other, which the ray divine hath
touched,

Replete with vivid promise, bright as
spring.'

'We see, then, as we feel,' the Wanderer
thus

With a complacent animation spake,
'And in your judgment, Sir! the mind's
repose 560

On evidence is not to be ensured
By act of naked reason. Moral truth

Is no mechanic structure, built by rule;
And which, once built, retains a steadfast
shape

And undisturbed proportions; but a
thing 565

Subject, you deem, to vital accidents;
And, like the water-lily, lives and thrives,

Whose root is fixed in stable earth, whose
head

Floats on the tossing waves. With joy
sincere

I re-salute these sentiments confirmed
By your authority. But how acquire 571

The inward principle that gives effect
To outward argument; the passive will

Meek to admit; the active energy,
Strong and unbounded to embrace, and
firm 575

To keep and cherish? how shall man unite
With self-forgetting tenderness of heart

An earth-despising dignity of soul?
Wise in that union, and without it blind!'

'The way,' said I, 'to court, if not
obtain 580

The ingenuous mind, apt to be set aright;
This, in the lonely dell discoursing, you
Declared at large; and by what exercise
From visible nature, or the inner self
Power may be trained, and renovation
brought 585

To those who need the gift. But, after all,
Is aught so certain as that man is doomed
To breathe beneath a vault of ignorance?
The natural roof of that dark house in
which 590

His soul is pent! How little can be
known—
This is the wise man's sigh; how far we
err—
This is the good man's not unfrequent
pang!
And they perhaps err least, the lowly
class 595

Whom a benign necessity compels
To follow reason's least ambitious course;
Such do I mean who, unperplexed by
doubt,
And unincited by a wish to look
Into high objects farther than they may,
Pace to and fro, from morn till eventide,
The narrow avenue of daily toil 600
For daily bread.'

'Yes,' buoyantly exclaimed
The pale Recluse—'praise to the sturdy
plough,
And patient spade; praise to the simple
creek,
And ponderous loom—resounding while
it holds
Body and mind in one captivity; 605
And let the light mechanic tool be hailed
With honour; which, encasing by the
power
Of long companionship, the artist's hand,
Cuts off that hand, with all its world of
nerves,
From a too busy commerce with the
heart! 610
—Inglorious implements of craft and toil,
Both ye that shape and build, and ye
that force,
By slow solicitation, earth to yield
Her annual bounty, sparingly dealt forth
With wise reluctance; you would I extol,
Not for gross good alone which ye pro-
duce, 616
But for the impertinent and ceaseless
strife
Of proofs and reasons ye preclude—in
those
Who to your dull society are born,
And with their humble birthright rest
content. 620
—Would I had ne'er renounced it!'
A slight flush
Of moral anger previously had tinged
The old Man's cheek; but, at this closing
turn

Of self-reproach, it passed away. Said he,
'That which we feel we utter; as we
think

So have we argued; reaping for our pains
No visible recompense. For our relief
'You,' to the Pastor turning thus he spake,
'Have kindly interposed. May I entreat
Your further help? The mine of real
life

Dig for us; and present us, in the shape
Of virgin ore, that gold which we, by
pains

Fruitless as those of aery alchemists,
Seek from the torturing crucible. There
lies

Around us a domain where you have long
Watched both the outward course and
inner heart:

Give us, for our abstractions, solid facts;
For our disputes, plain pictures. Say
what man

He is who cultivates yon hanging field;
What qualities of mind she bears, who
comes,

For morn and evening service, with her
pail,

To that green pasture; place before our
sight

The family who dwell within yon house
Fenced round with glittering laurel; or
in that

Below, from which the curling smoke
ascends.

Or rather, as we stand on holy earth,¹
And have the dead around us, take from
them

Your instances; for they are both best
known,

And by frail man most equitably judged.
Epitomise the life; pronounce, you can,
Authentic epitaphs on some of these

Who, from their lowly mansions hither
brought,

Beneath this turf lie mouldering at our
feet:

So, by your records, may our doubts be
solved;

And so, not searching higher, we may learn
To prize the breath we share with human
kind;

And look upon the dust of man with awe.'

The Priest replied—'An office you
impose

For which peculiar requisites are mine;
Yet much, I feel, is wanting—else the
task

Would be most grateful. True indeed it is
That they whom death has hidden from
our sight

Are worthiest of the mind's regard; with
these

The future cannot contradict the past:

¹ See Note, p. 728.

Mortality's last exercise and proof
Is undergone; the transit made that shows
The very Soul, revealed as she departs.
Yet, on your first suggestion, will I give,
Ere we descend into these silent vaults,
One picture from the living.

You behold, 670
High on the breast of yon dark moun-
tain, dark

With stony barrenness, a shining speck
Bright as a sunbeam sleeping till a shower
Brush it away, or cloud pass over it;

And such it might be deemed—a sleeping
sunbeam; 675

But 'tis a plot of cultivated ground,
Cut off, an island in the dusky waste;
And that attractive brightness is its own.

The lofty site, by nature framed to tempt
Amid a wilderness of rocks and stones

The tiller's hand, a hermit might have
chosen, 681

For opportunity presented, thence
Far forth to send his wandering eye o'er
land

And ocean, and look down upon the
works,

The habitations, and the ways of men,
Himself unseen! But no tradition tells
That ever hermit dipped his maple dish

In the sweet spring that lurks 'mid yon
green fields;

And no such visionary views belong 689
To those who occupy and till the ground,

High on that mountain where they long
have dwelt

A wedded pair in childless solitude.
A house of stones collected on the spot,
By rude hands built, with rocky knolls

in front,
Backed also by a ledge of rock, whose
crest 695

Of birch-trees waves over the chimney-
top;

A rough abode—in colour, shape, and
size,

Such as in unsafe times of border-war
Might have been wished for and con-
trived, to elude

The eye of roving plunderer—for their
need 700

Suffices; and unshaken bears the assault
Of their most dreaded foe, the strong
South-west

In anger blowing from the distant sea.
—Alone within her solitary hut; 704

There, or within the compass of her fields,
At any moment may the Dame be found,
True as the stock-dove to her shallow
nest

And to the grove that holds it. She
beguiles

By intermingled work of house and field
The summer's day, and winter's; with
success 710

THE EXCURSION

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Not equal, but sufficient to maintain,
Even at the worst, a smooth stream of
content,
Until the expected hour at which her
Mate
From the far-distant quarry's vault re-
turns;
And by his converse crowns a silent day
With evening cheerfulness. In powers of
mind,
In scale of culture, few among my flock
Hold lower rank than this sequestered
pair:
But true humility descends from heaven;
And that best gift of heaven hath fallen
on them;
Abundant recompense for every want.
—Stoop from your height, ye proud, and
copy these!
Who, in their noiseless dwelling-place,
can hear
The voice of wisdom whispering scripture
texts
For the mind's government, or temper's
peace;
And recommending for their mutual need,
Forgiveness, patience, hope, and charity!

'Much was I pleased,' the grey-haired
Wanderer said,
'When to those shining fields our notice
first
You turned; and yet more pleased have
from your lips
Gathered this fair report of them who
dwell
In that retirement; whither, by such
course
Of evil hap and good as oft awaits
A tired way-faring man, once I was
brought
While traversing alone yon mountain-pass.
Dark on my road the autumnal evening
fell,
And night succeeded with unusual gloom,
So hazardous that feet and hands became
Guides better than mine eyes—until a
light
High in the gloom appeared, too high,
methought,
For human habitation; but I longed
To reach it, destitute of other hope.
I looked with steadiness as sailors look
On the north star, or watch-tower's dis-
tant lamp,
And saw the light—now fixed—and shift-
ing now—
Not like a dancing meteor, but in line
Of never-varying motion, to and fro.
It is no night-fire of the naked hills,
Thought I—some friendly covert must be
near.
With this persuasion thitherward my
steps

I turn, and reach at last the guiding light;
Joy to myself! but to the heart of her
Who there was standing on the open hill,
(The same kind Matron whom your
tongue hath praised)
Alarm and disappointment! The alarm
Ceased, when she learned through what
mishap I came,
And by what help had gained those dis-
tant fields.
Drawn from her cottage, on that airy
height,
Bearing a lantern in her hand she stood,
Or paced the ground—to guide her Hus-
band home,
By that unwearied signal, kenned afar;
An anxious duty! which the lofty site,
Traversed but by a few irregular paths,
Imposes, whensoever untoward chance
Detains him after his accustomed hour
Till night lies black upon the ground.
"But come,
Come," said the Matron, "to our poor
abode;
Those dark rocks hide it!" Entering, I
beheld
A blazing fire—beside a cleanly hearth
Sate down; and to her office, with leave
asked,
The Dame returned.
Or ere that glowing pile
Of mountain turf required the builder's
hand
Its wasted splendour to repair, the door
Opened, and she re-entered with glad
looks,
Her Helpmate following, Hospitable fare,
Frank conversation, made the evening's
treat:
Need a bewildered traveller wish for
more?
But more was given; I studied as we sate
By the bright fire, the good Man's form,
and face
Not less than beautiful; an open brow
Of undisturbed humanity; a cheek
Suffused with something of a feminine hue;
Eyes beaming courtesy and mild regard;
But, in the quicker turns of the discourse,
Expression slowly varying, that evinced
A tardy apprehension. From a fount
Lost, thought I, in the obscurities of time,
But honoured once, those features and
that mien
May have descended, though I see them
here.
In such a man, so gentle and subdued,
Withal so graceful in his gentleness,
A race illustrious for heroic deeds,
Humbled, but not degraded, may expire.
This pleasing fancy (cherished and upheld
By sundry recollections of such fall
From high to low, ascent from low to
high,

As books record, and even the careless
mind

Cannot but notice among men and
things)

Went with me to the place of my repose.

'Roused by the crowing cock at dawn
of day,

800

I yet had risen too late to interchange

A morning salutation with my Host,

Gone forth already to the far-off seat

Of his day's work. "Three dark mid-
winter months

Pass," said the Matron, "and I never see,
Save when the sabbath brings its kind

release,

806

My helpmate's face by light of day. He
quits

His door in darkness, nor till dusk returns.
And, through Heaven's blessing, thus we

gain the bread

For which we pray; and for the wants
provide

810

Of sickness, accident, and helpless age.

Companions have I many; many friends,
Dependants, comforters—my wheel, my

fire,

All day the house-clock ticking in mine
ear,

The cackling hen, the tender chicken
brood,

815

And the wild birds that gather round my
porch.

This honest sheep-dog's countenance I
read;

With him can talk; nor blush to waste a
word

On creatures less intelligent and shrewd.
And if the blustering wind that drives the

clouds

820

Care not for me, he lingers round my door,
And makes me pastime when our tempers

suit;—

But, above all, my thoughts are my sup-
port,

My comfort:—would that they were
oftener fixed

On what, for guidance in the way that
leads

825

To heaven, I know, by my Redeemer
taught."

The Matron ended—nor could I forbear
To exclaim—"O happy! yielding to the

law

Of these privations, richer in the main!—
While thankless thousands are oppress

and clogged

830

By ease and leisure; by the very wealth
And pride of opportunity made poor;

While tens of thousands falter in their
path,

And sink, through utter want of cheering
light;

834

For you the hours of labour do not flag;

For you each evening hath its shining star,
And every sabbath-day its golden sun."

'Yes!' said the Solitary with a smile
That seemed to break from an expanding
heart,

'The untutored bird may found, and so
construct,

840

And with such soft materials line, her nest
Fixed in the centre of a prickly brake,

That the thorns wound her not; they
only guard.

Powers not unjustly likened to those gifts
Of happy instinct which the woodland

bird
Shares with her species, nature's grace

sometimes

846

Upon the individual doth confer,
Among her higher creatures born and

trained

To use of reason. And, I own that, tired
Of the ostentatious world—a swelling

stage

850

With empty actions and vain passions
stuffed,

And from the private struggles of man-
kind

Hoping far less than I could wish to hope,
Far less than once I trusted and be-
lieved—

I love to hear of those, who, not contend-
ing

855

Nor summoned to contend for virtue's
prize,

Miss not the humbler good at which they
aim,

Blest with a kindly faculty to blunt
The edge of adverse circumstance, and

turn

Into their contraries the petty plagues
And hindrances with which they stand

beset.

861

In early youth, among my native hills,
I knew a Scottish Peasant who possessed

A few small crofts of stone-encumbered
ground;

Masses of every shape and size, that lay
Scattered about under the mouldering

walls

866

Of a rough precipice; and some, apart,
In quarters unobnoxious to such chance,

As if the moon had showered them down
in spite.

But he repined not. Though the plough
was scared

870

By these obstructions, "round the shady
stones

A fertilising moisture," said the Swain,
"Gathers, and is preserved; and feeding

dews

And damps, through all the droughty
summer day

From out their substance issuing, main-
tain

875

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK V

Herbage that never fails: no grass springs
up

So green, so fresh, so plentiful, as mine!"
But thinly sown these natures; rare, at
least,

The mutual aptitude of seed and soil
That yields such kindly product. He,
whose bed 880

Perhaps yon loose sods cover, the poor
Pensioner

Brought yesterday from our sequestered
dell

Here to lie down in lasting quiet, he,
If living now, could otherwise report

Of rustic loneliness: that grey-haired
Orphan— 885

So call him, for humanity to him
No parent was—feelingly could have told,

In life, in death, what solitude can breed
Of selfishness, and cruelty, and vice;

Or, if breed not, hath not power to cure.
—But your compliance, Sir! with our
request 891

My words too long have hindered.
Undeterred,

Perhaps incited rather, by these shocks,
In no ungracious opposition given

To the confiding spirit of his own 895
Experienced faith, the reverend Pastor
said,

Around him looking; 'Where shall I
begin?

Who shall be first selected from my flock
Gathered together in their peaceful fold?'

He paused—and having lifted up his eyes
To the pure heaven, he cast them down
again 901

Upon the earth beneath his feet; and
spake:—

'To a mysteriously-united pair
This place is consecrate; to Death and
Life,

And to the best affections that proceed
From their conjunction; consecrate to
faith 906

In him who bled for man upon the cross;
Hallowed to revelation; and no less

To reason's mandates; and the hopes
divine

Of pure imagination;—above all, 910
To charity, and love, that have provided,
Within these precincts, a capacious bed

And receptacle, open to the good
And evil, to the just and the unjust; 914

In which they find an equal resting-place:
Even as the multitude of kindred brooks
And streams, whose murmur fills this
hollow vale,

Whether their course be turbulent or
smooth, 918

Their waters clear or sullied, all are lost
Within the bosom of yon crystal Lake,

And end their journey in the same repose!

'And blest are they who sleep; and we
that know,

While in a spot like this we breathe and
walk,

That all beneath us by the wings are
covered

Of motherly humanity, outspread 925
And gathering all within their tender
shade,

Though loth and slow to come! A battle-
field,

In stillness left when slaughter is no more,
With this compared, makes a strange
spectacle!

A dismal prospect yields the wild shore
strewn 930

With wrecks, and trod by feet of young
and old

Wandering about in miserable search
Of friends or kindred, whom the angry sea

Restores not to their prayer! Ah! who
would think

That all the scattered subjects which com-
pose 935

Earth's melancholy vision through the
space

Of all her climes—these wretched, these
depraved,

To virtue lost, insensible of peace,
From the delights of charity cut off, 939

To pity dead, the oppressor and the
oppress;

Tyrants who utter the destroying word,
And slaves who will consent to be de-
stroyed—

Were of one species with the sheltered few,
Who, with a dutiful and tender hand,

Lodged, in a dear appropriated spot, 945
This file of infants; some that never
breathed

The vital air; others, which, though
allowed

That privilege, did yet expire too soon,
Or with too brief a warning, to admit

Administration of the holy rite 950
That lovingly consigns the babe to the
arms

Of Jesus, and his everlasting care.
These that in trembling hope are laid
apart;

And the besprinkled nursling, unrequired
Till he begins to smile upon the breast

That feeds him; and the tottering little-
one 956

Taken from air and sunshine when the rose
Of infancy first blooms upon his cheek;

The thinking, thoughtless, school-boy;
the bold youth

Of soul impetuous, and the bashful maid
Smitten while all the promises of life 961

Are opening round her; those of middle
age,

Cast down while confident in strength
they stand,

Like pillars fixed more firmly, as might
 seem,
 And more secure, by very weight of all
 That, for support, rests on them; the
 decayed 966
 And burthensome; and lastly, that poor
 few
 Whose light of reason is with age extinct;
 The hopeful and the hopeless, first and
 last,
 The earliest summoned and the longest
 spared— 970
 Are here deposited, with tribute paid
 Various, but unto each some tribute paid;
 As if, amid these peaceful hills and groves,
 Society were touched with kind concern,
 And gentle "Nature grieved, that one
 should die;" 975
 Or, if the change demanded no regret,
 Observed the liberating stroke—and
 blessed.

'And whence that tribute? wherefore
 these regards?'
 Not from the naked *Heart* alone of Man
 (Though claiming high distinction upon
 earth 980
 As the sole spring and fountain-head of
 tears,
 His own peculiar utterance for distress
 Or gladness)—'No,' the philosophic Priest
 Continued, 'tis not in the vital seat
 Of feeling to produce them, without aid
 From the pure soul, the soul sublime and
 pure; 986
 With her two faculties of eye and ear,
 The one by which a creature, whom his
 sins

Have rendered prone, can upward look
 to heaven; 989
 The other that empowers him to perceive
 The voice of Deity, on height and plain,
 Whispering those truths in stillness, which
 the WORD,
 To the four quarters of the winds, pro-
 claims.
 Not without such assistance could the use
 Of these benign observances prevail: 995
 Thus are they born, thus fostered, thus
 maintained;
 And by the care prospective of our wise
 Forefathers, who, to guard against the
 shocks,
 The fluctuation and decay of things,
 Embodied and established these high
 truths 1000
 In solemn institutions:—men convinced
 That life is love and immortality,
 The being one, and one the element.
 There lies the channel, and original bed,
 From the beginning, hollowed out and
 scooped 1005
 For Man's affections—else betrayed and
 lost,
 And swallowed up 'mid deserts infinite!
 This is the genuine course, the aim, and
 end
 Of prescient reason; all conclusions else
 Are abject, vain, presumptuous, and per-
 verse. 1010
 The faith partaking of those holy times,
 Life, I repeat, is energy of love
 Divine or human; exercised in pain,
 In strife, in tribulation; and ordained,
 If so approved and sanctified, to pass,
 Through shades and silent rest, to endless
 joy.' 1016

1 See Notes, p. 728.

BOOK SIXTH

THE CHURCHYARD AMONG THE MOUNTAINS

ARGUMENT

Poet's Address to the State and Church of England.—The Pastor not inferior to the ancient Worthies of the Church.—He begins his Narratives with an instance of unrequited Love.—Anguish of mind subdued, and how.—The lonely Miner.—An instance of perseverance.—Which leads by contrast to an example of abused talents, irresolution, and weakness.—Solitary, applying this covertly to his own case, asks for an instance of some Stranger, whose dispositions may have led him to end his days here.—Pastor, in answer, gives an account of the harmonising influence of Solitude upon two men of opposite principles, and where.—Solitary hints at an overpowering Fatality.—Answer of the Pastor.—What subjects he will exclude from his Narratives.—Conversation upon this.—Instance of an unamiable character, a Female, and why given.—Contrasted with this, a meek sufferer, from unguarded and betrayed love.—Instance of heavier guilt, and its consequences to the Offender.—With this instance of a Marriage Contract broken is contrasted one of a Widow, evidencing his faithful affection towards his deceased wife by his care of their female Children.

Hail to the crown by Freedom shaped—
 to gird
 An English Sovereign's brow! and to the
 throne
 Whereon he sits! Whose deep foundations
 lie
 In veneration and the people's love;
 Whose steps are equity, whose seat is law.
 —Hail to the State of England! And
 conjoin
 With this a salutation as devout,
 Made to the spiritual fabric of her Church;

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK VI

Founded in truth; by blood of Martyrdom
Cemented; by the hands of Wisdom
reared 10
In beauty of holiness, with ordered pomp,
Decent and unproved. The voice, that
greeted
The majesty of both, shall pray for both;
That, mutually protected and sustained,
They may endure long as the sea sur-
rounds 15
This favoured Land, or sunshine warms
her soil.

And O, ye swelling hills, and spacious
plains!
Besprent from shore to shore with steeple-
towers,
And spires whose 'silent finger points to
heaven;' 19
Nor wanting, at wide intervals, the bulk
Of ancient minster lifted above the cloud
Of the dense air, which town or city
breeds
To intercept the sun's glad beams—may
ne'er
That true succession fail of English
hearts, 24
Who, with ancestral feeling, can perceive
What in those holy structures ye possess
Of ornamental interest, and the charm
Of pious sentiment diffused afar,
And human charity, and social love. 29
—Thus never shall the indignities of time
Approach their reverend graces, un-
opposed;
Nor shall the elements be free to hurt
Their fair proportions; nor the blinder
rage
Of bigot zeal madly to overturn;
And, if the desolating hand of war 35
Spare them, they shall continue to bestow,
Upon the thronged abodes of busy men
(Depraved, and ever prone to fill the mind
Exclusively with transitory things)
An air and mien of dignified pursuit; 40
Of sweet civility, on rustic wilds.

The Poet, fostering for his native land
Such hope, entreats that servants may
abound
Of those pure altars worthy; ministers
Detached from pleasure, to the love of
gain 45
Superior, insusceptible of pride,
And by ambitious longings undisturbed;
Men, whose delight is where their duty
leads
Or fixes them; whose least distinguished
day
Shines with some portion of that heavenly
lustre 50
Which makes the sabbath lovely in the
sight

Of blessed angels, pitying human cares.
—And, as on earth it is the doom of truth
To be perpetually attacked by foes
Open or covert, be that priesthood still,
For her defence, replenished with a band
Of strenuous champions, in scholastic arts
Thoroughly disciplined; nor (if in course
Of the revolving world's disturbances
Cause should recur, which righteous
Heaven avert! 60
To meet such trial) from their spiritual
sires
Degenerate; who, constrained to wield
the sword
Of disputation, shrunk not, though as-
sailed
With hostile din, and combating in sight
Of angry umpires, partial and unjust; 65
And did, thereafter, bathe their hands in
fire,
So to declare the conscience satisfied:
Nor for their bodies would accept release;
But, blessing God and praising him, be-
queathed
With their last breath, from out the
smouldering flame, 70
The faith which they by diligence had
earned,
Or, through illuminating grace, received,
For their dear countrymen, and all man-
kind.
O high example, constancy divine!

Even such a Man (inheriting the zeal
And from the sanctity of elder times 76
Not deviating,—a priest, the like of
whom,
If multiplied, and in their stations set,
Would o'er the bosom of a joyful land
Spread true religion and her genuine
fruits) 80
Before me stood that day; on holy
ground
Fraught with the relics of mortality,
Exalting tender themes, by just degrees
To lofty raised; and to the highest, last;
The head and mighty paramount of
truths,— 85
Immortal life, in never-fading worlds,
For mortal creatures, conquered and
secured.

That basis laid, those principles of faith
Announced, as a preparatory act
Of reverence done to the spirit of the
place, 90
The Pastor cast his eyes upon the ground;
Not, as before, like one oppressed with
awe,
But with a mild and social cheerfulness;
Then to the Solitary turned, and spake.

'At morn or eve, in your retired
domain, 95

¹ See Note, p. 733.

Perchance you not unfrequently have
marked

A Visitor—in quest of herbs and flowers;
Too delicate employ, as would appear,
For one, who, though of drooping mien,
had yet

From nature's kindness received a frame
Robust as ever rural labour bred.' 101

The Solitary answered: 'Such a Form
Full well I recollect. We often crossed
Each other's path; but, as the Intruder
seemed

Fondly to prize the silence which he
kept, 105

And I as willingly did cherish mine,
We met, and passed, like shadows. I
have heard,

From my good Host, that being crazed in
brain

By unrequited love, he scaled the rocks,
Dived into caves, and pierced the matted
woods, 110

In hope to find some virtuous herb of
power

To cure his malady!'

The Vicar smiled,—
'Alas! before to-morrow's sun goes down
His habitation will be here: for him
That open grave is destined.'

'Died he then 115
Of pain and grief?' the Solitary asked,
'Do not believe it; never could that be!'

'He loved,' the Vicar answered, 'deeply
loved,

Loved fondly, truly, fervently; and dared
At length to tell his love, but sued in
vain; 120

Rejected, yea repelled; and, if with scorn
Upon the haughty maiden's brow, 'tis but
A high-prized plume which female Beauty
wears

In wantonness of conquest, or puts on
To cheat the world, or from herself to
hide 125

Humiliation, when no longer free.
That he could brook, and glory in;—but
when

The tidings came that she whom he had
wooed

Was wedded to another, and his heart
Was forced to rend away its only hope;
Then, Pity could have scarcely found on
earth 131

An object worthier of regard than he,
In the transition of that bitter hour!
Lost was she, lost; nor could the Sufferer
say

That in the act of preference he had been
Unjustly dealt with; but the Maid was
gone! 136

Had vanished from his prospects and
desires;

Not by translation to the heavenly choir
Who have put off their mortal spoils—
ah no! 139

She lives another's wishes to complete,—
"Joy be their lot, and happiness," he cried,
"His lot and hers, as misery must be mine!"

'Such was that strong concussion; but
the Man,

Who trembled, trunk and limbs, like some
huge oak 144

By a fierce tempest shaken, soon resumed
The steadfast quiet natural to a mind

Of composition gentle and sedate,
And, in its movements, circumspect and
slow.

To books, and to the long-forsaken desk,
O'er which enchained by science he had
loved 150

To bend, he stoutly re-addressed himself,
Resolved to quell his pain, and search for
truth

With keener appetite (if that might be)
And closer industry. Of what ensued
Within the heart no outward sign ap-
peared 155

Till a betraying sickliness was seen
To tinge his cheek; and through his frame
it crept

With slow mutation unconcealable;
Such universal change as autumn makes
In the fair body of a leafy grove 160

Discoloured, then divested.

'Tis affirmed
By poets skilled in nature's secret ways
That Love will not submit to be controlled
By mastery:—and the good Man lacked
not friends

Who strove to instil this truth into his
mind, 165

A mind in all heart-mysteries unversed.
"Go to the hills," said one, "remit a while
This baneful diligence:—at early morn
Court the fresh air, explore the heaths
and woods;

And, leaving it to others to foretell, 170
By calculations sage, the ebb and flow
Of tides, and when the moon will be
eclipsed,

Do you, for your own benefit, construct
A calendar of flowers, plucked as they
blow

Where health abides, and cheerfulness,
and peace." 175

The attempt was made;—'tis needless to
report

How hopelessly; but innocence is strong,
And an entire simplicity of mind

A thing most sacred in the eye of Heaven;
That opens, for such sufferers, relief 180

Within the soul, fountains of grace divine;
And doth commend their weakness and
disease

To Nature's care, assisted in her office

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK VI

By all the elements that round her wait
To generate, to preserve, and to restore;
And by her beautiful array of forms 186
Shedding sweet influence from above; or
pure
Delight exhaling from the ground they
tread.'

'Impute it not to impatience, if,' ex-
claimed
The Wanderer, 'I infer that he was
healed 190
By perseverance in the course prescribed.'

'You do not err: the powers, that had
been lost
By slow degrees, were gradually regained;
The fluttering nerves composed; the beat-
ing heart
In rest established; and the jarring
thoughts 195
To harmony restored.—But yon dark
mould
Will cover him, in the fulness of his
strength,
Hastily smitten by a fever's force;
Yet not with stroke so sudden as refused
Time to look back with tenderness on
her 200
Whom he had loved in passion; and to
send
Some farewell words—with one, but one,
request;
That, from his dying hand, she would
accept
Of his possessions that which most he
prized;
A book, upon whose leaves some chosen
plants, 205
By his own hand disposed with nicest care,
In undecaying beauty were preserved;
Mute register, to him, of time and place,
And various fluctuations in the breast;
To her, a monument of faithful love 210
Conquered, and in tranquillity retained!

'Close to his destined habitation, lies
One who achieved a humbler victory,
Though marvellous in its kind. A place
there is
High in these mountains, that allured a
band 215
Of keen adventurers to unite their pains
In search of precious ore: they tried, were
foiled—
And all desisted, all, save him alone.
He, taking counsel of his own clear
thoughts, 219
And trusting only to his own weak hands,
Urged unremittingly the stubborn work,
Unseconded, uncountenanced; then, as
time
Passed on, while still his lonely efforts
found

No recompense, derided; and at length,
By many pitied, as insane of mind; 225
By others dreaded as the luckless thrall
Of subterranean Spirits feeding hope
By various mockery of sight and sound;
Hope after hope, encouraged and de-
stroyed.

—But when the lord of seasons had
matured 230
The fruits of earth through space of twice
ten years,
The mountain's entrails offered to his
view
And trembling grasp the long-deferred
reward.

Not with more transport did Columbus
greet
A world, his rich discovery! But our
Swain, 235

A very hero till his point was gained,
Proved all unable to support the weight
Of prosperous fortune. On the fields he
looked

With an unsettled liberty of thought,
Wishes and endless schemes; by daylight
walked 240

Giddy and restless; ever and anon
Quaffed in his gratitude immoderate cups;
And truly might be said to die of joy!
He vanished; but conspicuous to this day
The path remains that linked his cottage-
door 245

To the mine's mouth; a long and slanting
track,

Upon the rugged mountain's stony side,
Worn by his daily visits to and from
The darksome centre of a constant hope.
This vestige, neither force of beating rain,
Nor the vicissitudes of frost and thaw 251
Shall cause to fade, till ages pass away;
And it is named, in memory of the event,
The PATH OF PERSEVERANCE.'

'Thou from whom
Man has his strength,' exclaimed the
Wanderer, 'oh! 255
Do thou direct it! To the virtuous grant
The penetrative eye which can perceive
In this blind world the guiding vein of
hope;
That, like this Labourer, such may dig
their way,
"Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified;" 260
Grant to the wise his firmness of resolve!'

'That prayer were not superfluous,'
said the Priest,
'Amid the noblest relics, proudest dust,
That Westminster, for Britain's glory,
holds
Within the bosom of her awful pile, 265
Ambitiously collected. Yet the sigh,
Which wafts that prayer to heaven, is
due to all,
Wherever laid, who living fell below

Their virtue's humbler mark; a sigh of ^{pain} Fair expectations; nor, when to the
 If to the opposite extreme they sank. 270 world's 310
 How would you pity her who yonder
 rests; Capacious field forth went the Adven-
 Him, farther off; the pair, who here are turer, there
 laid; Were he and his attainments overlooked,
 But, above all, that mixture of earth's Or scantily rewarded; but all hopes,
 mould Cherished for him, he suffered to depart,
 Whom sight of this green hillock to my Like blighted buds; or clouds that mi-
 mind micked land 315
 Recalls! Before the sailor's eye; or diamond drops
 That sparkling decked the morning grass;
 That was attractive, and hath ceased to
 be!
 'Yet, when this Prodigal returned, the
 rites
 Of joyful greeting were on him bestowed,
 Who, by humiliation undeterred, 322
 Sought for his weariness a place of rest
 Within his Father's gates.—Whence came
 he?—clothed
 In tattered garb, from hovels where abides
 Necessity, the stationary host 325
 Of vagrant poverty; from rifted barns
 Where no one dwells but the wide-staring
 owl
 And the owl's prey; from these bare
 haunts, to which
 He had descended from the proud saloon,
 He came, the ghost of beauty and of
 health, 330
 The wreck of gaiety! But soon revived
 In strength, in power refitted, he renewed
 His suit to Fortune; and she smiled again
 Upon a fickle Ingrate. Thrice he rose,
 Thrice sank as willingly. For he—whose
 nerves 335
 Were used to thrill with pleasure, while
 his voice
 Softly accompanied the tuneful harp,
 By the nice finger of fair ladies touched
 In glittering halls—was able to derive
 No less enjoyment from an abject choice.
 Who happier for the moment—who more
 blithe 342
 Than this fallen Spirit? in those dreary
 holds
 His talents lending to exalt the freaks
 Of merry-making beggars,—now, pro-
 voked 344
 To laughter multiplied in louder peals
 By his malicious wit; then, all enchained
 With mute astonishment, themselves to
 see
 In their own arts outdone, their fame
 eclipsed,
 As by the very presence of the Fiend
 Who dictates and inspires illusive feats,
 For knavish purposes! The city, too, 351
 (With shame I speak it) to her guilty
 bowers
 Allured him, sunk so low in self-respect
 As there to linger, there to eat his bread,

Hind minstrel of voluptuous blandishment; 355

Charming the air with skill of hand or voice,

Listen who would, be wrought upon who might,

Sincerely wretched hearts, or falsely gay.

—Such the too frequent tenour of his boast 359

In ears that relished the report;—but all was from his Parents happily concealed; Who saw enough for blame and pitying love.

They also were permitted to receive

His last, repentant breath; and closed his eyes, 364

No more to open on that irksome world Where he had long existed in the state

Of a young fowl beneath one mother hatched,

Though from another sprung, different in kind:

Where he had lived, and could not cease to live,

Distracted in propensity; content 370

With neither element of good or ill;

And yet in both rejoicing; man unblest;

Of contradictions infinite the slave,

Till his deliverance, when Mercy made him

One with himself, and one with them that sleep.' 375

'Tis strange,' observed the Solitary, 'strange

It seems, and scarcely less than pitiful,

That in a land where charity provides

For all that can no longer feed themselves,

A man like this should choose to bring his shame 380

To the parental door; and with his sighs

Infect the air which he had freely breathed

In happy infancy. He could not pine

Through lack of converse; no—he must have found

Abundant exercise for thought and speech,

In his individual being, self-reviewed, 386

Self-catechised, self-punished. — Some there are

Who, drawing near their final home, and much

And daily longing that the same were reached,

Would rather shun than seek the fellow-ship 390

Of kindred mould.—Such haply here are laid?'

'Yes,' said the Priest, 'the Genius of our hills—

Who seems, by these stupendous barriers cast

Round his domain, desirous not alone

To keep his own, but also to exclude 395

All other progeny—doth sometimes lure,

Even by his studied depth of privacy,

The unhappy alien hoping to obtain

Concealment, or seduced by wish to find,

In place from outward molestation free,

Helps to internal ease. Of many such 401

Could I discourse; but as their stay was brief,

So their departure only left behind

Fancies, and loose conjectures. Other trace

Survives, for worthy mention, of a pair

Who, from the pressure of their several fates, 406

Meeting as strangers, in a petty town

Whose blue roofs ornament a distant reach

Of this far-winding vale, remained as friends

True to their choice; and gave their bones in trust 410

To this loved cemetery, here to lodge

With unescutcheoned privacy interred

Far from the family vault.—A Chieftain one

By right of birth; within whose spotless breast

The fire of ancient Caledonia burned:

He, with the foremost whose impatience hailed 416

The Stuart, landing to resume, by force

Of arms, the crown which bigotry had lost,

Aroused his clan; and, fighting at their head,

With his brave sword endeavoured to prevent 420

Culloden's fatal overthrow. Escaped

From that disastrous rout, to foreign shores

He fled; and when the lenient hand of time

Those troubles had appeased, he sought and gained,

For his obscured condition, an obscure

Retreat, within this nook of English ground. 426

'The other, born in Britain's southern tract,

Had fixed his milder loyalty, and placed

His gentler sentiments of love and hate,

There, where they placed them who in conscience prized 430

The new succession, as a line of kings

Whose oath had virtue to protect the land

Against the dire assaults of papacy

And arbitrary rule. But launch thy bark

On the distempered flood of public life,

And cause for most rare triumph will be thine 436

If, spite of keenest eye and steadiest hand,

The stream, that bears thee there forward,

prove not, soon

Or late, a perilous master. He—who oft,

Beneath the battlements and stately trees
That round his mansion cast a sober
gloom, 441

Had moralised on this, and other truths
Of kindred import, pleased and satisfied—
Was forced to vent his wisdom with a
sigh

Heaved from the heart in fortune's bitter-
ness, 445

When he had crushed a plentiful estate
By ruinous contest, to obtain a seat
In Britain's senate. Fruitless was the
attempt:

And while the uproar of that desperate
strife

Continued yet to vibrate on his ear, 450
The vanquished Whig, under a borrowed
name,

(For the mere sound and echo of his own
Haunted him with sensations of disgust
That he was glad to lose) slunk from the
world

To the deep shade of those untravelled
Wilds; 455

In which the Scottish Laird had long
possessed

An undisturbed abode. Here, then, they
met,

Two doughty champions; flaming Jaco-
bite

And sullen Hanoverian! You might think
That losses and vexations, less severe 460
Than those which they had severally sus-
tained,

Would have inclined each to abate his
zeal

For his ungrateful cause; no,—I have
heard

My reverend Father tell that, 'mid the
calm

Of that small town encountering thus,
they filled, 465

Daily, its bowling-green with harmless
strife;

Plagued with uncharitable thoughts the
church;

And vexed the market-place. But in the
breasts

Of these opponents gradually was
wrought,

With little change of general sentiment,
Such leaning towards each other, that

their days 471
By choice were spent in constant fellow-
ship;

And if, at times, they fretted with the
yoke,

Those very bickerings made them love it
more.

'A favourite boundary to their length-
ened walks 475

This Churchyard was. And, whether they
had come

Treading their path in sympathy and
linked

In social converse, or by some short space
Discreetly parted to preserve the peace,

One spirit seldom failed to extend its
sway 480

Over both minds, when they awhile had
marked

The visible quiet of this holy ground,
And breathed its soothing air;—the spirit

of hope
And saintly magnanimity; that—spurn-
ing 484

The field of selfish difference and dispute,
And every care which transitory things,

Earth and the kingdoms of the earth,
create—

Doth, by a rapture of forgetfulness,
Preclude forgiveness, from the praise de-
barred,

Which else the Christian virtue might
have claimed. 490

'There live who yet remember here to
have seen

Their courtly figures, seated on the stump
Of an old yew, their favourite resting-
place.

But as the remnant of the long-lived tree
Was disappearing by a swift decay, 495

They, with joint care, determined to erect,
Upon its site, a dial, that might stand

For public use preserved, and thus sur-
vive

As their own private monument: for this
Was the particular spot, in which they

wished 500
(And Heaven was pleased to accomplish
the desire)

That, undivided, their remains should lie.
So, where the mouldered tree had stood,

was raised
Yon structure, framing, with the ascent
of steps

That to the decorated pillar lead, 505
A work of art more sumptuous than
might seem

To suit this place; yet built in no proud
scorn

Of rustic homeliness; they only aimed
To ensure for it respectful guardianship.

Around the margin of the plate, whereon
The shadow falls to note the stealthy

hours, 511
Winds an inscriptive legend.'—At these
words

Thither we turned; and gathered, as we
read,

The appropriate sense, in Latin numbers
couched:

'Time flies; it is his melancholy task 515
To bring, and bear away, delusive hopes,
And reproduce the troubles he destroys.

But, while his blindness thus is occupied,

*Disdaining Mortal! dost thou serve the will
Of Time's eternal Master, and that peace,
Which the world wants, shall be for thee
confirmed!* 521

'Smooth verse, inspired by no un-
lettered Muse,'
Exclaimed the Sceptic, 'and the strain of
thought
Accords with nature's language;—the soft
voice
Of yon white torrent falling down the
rocks 525
Speaks, less distinctly, to the same effect.
If, then, their blended influence be not
lost
Upon our hearts, not wholly lost, I grant,
Even upon mine, the more are we re-
quired 529
To feel for those among our fellow-men,
Who, offering no obeisance to the world,
Are yet made desperate by "too quick
a sense
Of constant infelicity," cut off
From peace like exiles on some barren
rock,
Their life's appointed prison; not more
free 535
Than sentinels, between two armies, set,
With nothing better, in the chill night
air,
Than their own thoughts to comfort them.
Say why
That ancient story of Prometheus chained
To the bare rock, on frozen Caucasus; 540
The vulture, the inexhaustible repast
Drawn from his vitals? Say what meant
the woes
By Tantalus entailed upon his race,
And the dark sorrows of the line of
Thebes?
Fictions in form, but in their substance
truths, 545
Tremendous truths? familiar to the men
Of long-past times, nor obsolete in ours.
Exchange the shepherd's frock of native
grey
For robes with regal purple tinged; con-
vert
The crook into a sceptre; give the pomp
Of circumstance; and here the tragic
Muse 551
Shall find apt subjects for her highest art.
Amid the groves, under the shadowy
hills,
The generations are prepared; the pangs,
The internal pangs, are ready; the dread
strife 555
Of poor humanity's afflicted will
Struggling in vain with ruthless destiny.'

'Though,' said the Priest in answer,
'these be terms
Which a divine philosophy rejects,

We, whose established and unailing
trust 560
Is in controlling Providence, admit
That, through all stations, human life
abounds
With mysteries;—for, if Faith were left
untried,
How could the might, that lurks within
her, then
Be shown? her glorious excellence—that
ranks 565
Among the first of Powers and Virtues—
proved?
Our system is not fashioned to preclude
That sympathy which you for others ask;
And I could tell, not travelling for my
theme
Beyond these humble graves, of grievous
crimes 570
And strange disasters; but I pass them
by,
Loth to disturb what Heaven hath hushed
in peace.
—Still less, far less, am I inclined to treat
Of Man degraded in his Maker's sight
By the deformities of brutish vice: 575
For, in such portraits, though a vulgar
face
And a coarse outside of repulsive life
And unaffecting manners might at once
Be recognised by all—"Ah! do not
think,"
The Wanderer somewhat eagerly ex-
claimed, 580
'Wish could be ours that you, for such
poor gain,
(Gain shall I call it?—gain of what?—for
whom?)
Should breathe a word tending to violate
Your own pure spirit. Not a step we
look for
In slight of that forbearance and reserve
Which common human-heartedness in-
spires, 586
And mortal ignorance and frailty claim,
Upon this sacred ground, if nowhere else.'

'True,' said the Solitary, 'be it far
From us to infringe the laws of charity.
Let judgment here in mercy be pro-
nounced; 591
This, self-respecting Nature prompts, and
this
Wisdom enjoins; but if the thing we seek
Be genuine knowledge, bear we then in
mind
How, from his lofty throne, the sun can
fling 595
Colours as bright on exhalations bred
By weedy pool or pestilential swamp,
As by the rivulet sparkling where it runs,
Or the pellucid lake.'

'Small risk,' said I,
'Of such illusion do we here incur; 600

Temptation here is none to exceed the truth;
 No evidence appears that they who rest
 Within this ground, were covetous of praise,
 Or of remembrance even, deserved or not.
 Green is the Churchyard, beautiful and green, 605
 Ridge rising gently by the side of ridge,
 A heaving surface, almost wholly free
 From interruption of sepulchral stones,
 And mantled o'er with aboriginal turf
 And everlasting flowers. These Dalesmen trust 610
 The lingering gleam of their departed lives
 To oral record, and the silent heart;
 Depositories faithful and more kind
 Than fondest epitaph: for, if those fail,
 What boots the sculptured tomb? And who can blame, 615
 Who rather would not envy, men that feel
 This mutual confidence; if, from such source,
 The practice flow,—if thence, or from a deep
 And general humility in death?
 Nor should I much condemn it, if it spring 620
 From disregard of time's destructive power,
 As only capable to prey on things
 Of earth, and human nature's mortal part.
 'Yet—in less simple districts, where we see
 Stone lift its forehead emulous of stone.
 In courting notice; and the ground all paved 626
 With commendations of departed worth;
 Reading, where'er we turn, of innocent lives,
 Of each domestic charity fulfilled,
 And sufferings meekly borne—I, for my part, 630
 Though with the silence pleased that here prevails,
 Among those fair recitals also range,
 Soothed by the natural spirit which they breathe.
 And, in the centre of a world whose soil
 Is rank with all unkindness, compassed round 635
 With such memorials, I have sometimes felt,
 It was no momentary happiness
 To have *one* Enclosure where the voice that speaks
 In envy or detraction is not heard;
 Which malice may not enter; where the traces 640
 Of evil inclinations are unknown;
 Where love and pity tenderly unite
 With resignation; and no jarring tone
 Intrudes, the peaceful concert to disturb
 Of amity and gratitude.
 'Thus sanctioned,' 645
 The Pastor said, 'I willingly confine
 My narratives to subjects that excite
 Feelings with these accordant; love, esteem,
 And admiration; lifting up a veil,
 A sunbeam introducing among hearts 650
 Retired and covert; so that ye shall have
 Clear images before your gladdened eyes
 Of nature's unambitious underwood,
 And flowers that prosper in the shade.
 And when
 I speak of such among my flock as swerved 655
 Or fell, those only shall be singled out
 Upon whose lapse, or error, something more
 Than brotherly forgiveness may attend;
 To such will we restrict our notice, else
 Better my tongue were mute.
 And yet there are,
 I feel, good reasons why we should not leave 661
 Wholly untraced a more forbidding way.
 For, strength to persevere and to support,
 And energy to conquer and repel—
 These elements of virtue, that declare 665
 The native grandeur of the human soul—
 Are oftentimes not unprofitably shown
 In the perverseness of a selfish course:
 Truth every day exemplified, no less
 In the grey cottage by the murmuring stream 670
 Than in fantastic conqueror's roving camp,
 Or 'mid the factious senate unappalled
 Whoe'er may sink, or rise—to sink again,
 As merciless proscription ebbs and flows.
 'There,' said the Vicar, pointing as he spake, 675
 'A woman rests in peace; surpassed by few
 In power of mind, and eloquent discourse.
 Tall was her stature; her complexion dark
 And saturnine; her head not raised to hold
 Converse with heaven, nor yet deprest towards earth, 680
 But in projection carried, as she walked
 For ever musing. Sunken were her eyes;
 Wrinkled and furrowed with habitual thought
 Was her broad forehead; like the brow of one
 Whose visual nerve shrinks from a painful glare 685
 Of overpowering light.—While yet a child,
 She, 'mid the humble flowerets of the vale,

Towered like the imperial thistle, not unfurnished

With its appropriate grace, yet rather seeking

To be admired, than coveted and loved.

Even at that age she ruled, a sovereign queen, 691

Over her comrades; else their simple sports,

Wanting all relish for her strenuous mind, Had crossed her only to be shunned with scorn.

—Oh! pang of sorrowful regret for those Whom, in their youth, sweet study has enthralled, 696

That they have lived for harsher servitude,

Whether in soul, in body, or estate! Such doom was hers; yet nothing could subdue 699

Her keen desire of knowledge, nor efface Those brighter images by books imprint

Upon her memory, faithfully as stars That occupy their places, and, though oft

Hidden by clouds, and oft bedimmed by haze,

Are not to be extinguished, nor impaired.

'Two passions, both degenerate, for they both 706

Began in honour, gradually obtained Rule over her, and vexed her daily life;

An unremitting, avaricious thrift; 709

And a strange thralldom of maternal love, That held her spirit, in its own despite,

Bound—by vexation, and regret, and scorn,

Constrained forgiveness, and relenting vows,

And tears, in pride suppressed, in shame concealed—

To a poor dissolute Son, her only child. —Her wedded days had opened with mishap, 716

Whence dire dependence. What could she perform

To shake the burthen off? Ah! there was felt,

Indignantly, the weakness of her sex. She mused, resolved, adhered to her resolve; 720

The hand grew slack in alms-giving, the heart

Closed by degrees to charity; heaven's blessing

Not seeking from that source, she placed her trust

In ceaseless pains—and strictest parsimony

Which sternly hoarded all that could be spared, 725

From each day's need, out of each day's least gain.

'Thus all was re-established, and a pile Constructed, that sufficed for every end, Save the contentment of the builder's mind;

A mind by nature indisposed to aught So placid, so inactive, as content; 731

A mind intolerant of lasting peace, And cherishing the pang her heart deplored.

Dread life of conflict! which I oft compared

To the agitation of a brook that runs 735

Down a rocky mountain, buried now and lost

In silent pools, now in strong eddies chained;

But never to be charmed to gentleness: Its best attainment fits of such repose

As timid eyes might shrink from fathoming. 740

'A sudden illness seized her in the strength

Of life's autumnal season.—Shall I tell How on her bed of death the Matron lay,

To Providence submissive, so she thought; But fretted, vexed, and wrought upon, almost 745

To anger, by the malady that griped Her prostrate frame with unrelaxing power,

As the fierce eagle fastens on the lamb? She prayed, she moaned;—her husband's sister watched 749

Her dreary pillow, waited on her needs; And yet the very sound of that kind foot

Was anguish to her ears! "And must she rule,"

This was the death-doomed Woman heard to say

In bitterness, "and must she rule and reign,

Sole Mistress of this house, when I am gone? 755

Tend what I tended, calling it her own!" Enough;—I fear, too much.—One vernal evening,

While she was yet in prime of health and strength,

I well remember, while I passed her door Alone, with loitering step, and upward eye 760

Turned towards the planet Jupiter that hung

Above the centre of the Vale, a voice Roused me, her voice; it said, "That glorious star

In its untroubled element will shine As now it shines, when we are laid in earth 765

And safe from all our sorrows." With a sigh

She spake, yet, I believe, not unsustained By faith in glory that shall far transcend

Aught by these perishable heavens dis-
closed
To sight or mind. Nor less than care
divine
Is divine mercy. She, who had rebelled,
Was into meekness softened and subdued;
Did, after trials not in vain prolonged,
With resignation sink into the grave;
And her uncharitable acts, I trust, 775
And harsh unkindnesses are all forgiven,
Tho' in this Vale, remembered with deep
awe.'

THE Vicar paused; and toward a seat
advanced,
A long stone-seat, fixed in the Church-
yard wall; 779
Part shaded by cool sycamore, and part
Offering a sunny resting-place to them
Who seek the House of worship, while
the bells
Yet ring with all their voices, or before
The last hath ceased its solitary knoll.
Beneath the shade we all sate down; and
there 785
His office, uninvited, he resumed.

'As on a sunny bank, a tender lamb
Lurks in safe shelter from the winds of
March,
Screened by its parent, so that little
mound
Lies guarded by its neighbour; the small
heap 790
Speaks for itself; an Infant there doth
rest;
The sheltering hillock is the Mother's
grave.
If mild discourse, and manners that con-
ferred
A natural dignity on humblest rank;
If glad some spirits, and benignant looks,
That for a face not beautiful did more
Than beauty for the fairest face can do;
And if religious tenderness of heart,
Grieving for sin, and penitential tears
Shed when the clouds had gathered and
dained 800
The spotless ether of a maiden life;
If these may make a hallowed spot of
earth
More holy in the sight of God or Man;
Then, o'er that mould, a sanctity shall
brood 804
Till the stars sicken at the day of doom.

'Ah! what a warning for a thoughtless
man,
Could field or grove, could any spot of
earth,
Show to his eye an image of the pangs
Which it hath witnessed; render back
an echo

Of the sad steps by which it hath been
trod! 810
There, by her innocent Baby's precious
grave,
And on the very turf that roofs her own,
The Mother oft was seen to stand, or
kneel
In the broad day, a weeping Magda-
lene.
Now she is not; the swelling turf reports
Of the fresh shower, but of poor Ellen's
tears 816
Is silent; nor is any vestige left
Of the path worn by mournful tread of
her
Who, at her heart's light bidding, once
had moved
In virgin fearlessness, with step that
seemed 820
Caught from the pressure of elastic turf
Upon the mountains gemmed with morn-
ing dew,
In the prime hour of sweetest scents and
airs.
—Serious and thoughtful was her mind;
and yet,
By reconciliation exquisite and rare, 825
The form, port, motions, of this Cottage-
girl
Were such as might have quickened and
inspired
A Titian's hand, address to picture forth
Oread or Dryad glancing through the
shade
What time the hunter's earliest horn is
heard 830
Startling the golden hills.

A wide-spread elm
Stands in our valley, named THE JOYFUL
TREE;
From dateless usage which our peasants
hold
Of giving welcome to the first of May
By dances round its trunk.—And if the
sky 835
Permit, like honours, dance and song, are
paid
To the Twelfth Night, beneath the frosty
stars
Or the clear moon. The queen of these
gay sports,
If not in beauty yet in sprightly air,
Was hapless Ellen.—No one touched the
ground 840
So deftly, and the nicest maiden's locks
Less gracefully were braided;—but this
praise,
Methinks, would better suit another place.

'She loved, and fondly deemed her-
self beloved.
—The road is dim, the current unper-
ceived, 845
The weakness painful and most pitiful,

THE RECURSION

[BOOK VI

By which a virtuous woman, in pure youth,

May be delivered to distress and shame.
Such fate was hers.—The last time Ellen danced,

Among her equals, round THE JOYFUL TREE, 850

She bore a secret burthen; and full soon
Was left to tremble for a breaking vow,—
Then, to bewail a sternly-broken vow,
Alone, within her widowed Mother's house.

It was the season of unfolding leaves, 855
Of days advancing toward their utmost length,

And small birds singing happily to mates
Happy as they. With spirit-saddening power

Winds pipe through fading woods; but those blithe notes 859

Strike the deserted to the heart; I speak
Of what I know, and what we feel within.
—Beside the cottage in which Ellen dwelt
Stands a tall ash-tree; to whose topmost twig

A thrush resorts, and annually chants,
At morn and evening from that naked perch, 865

While all the undergrove is thick with leaves,

A time-beguiling ditty, for delight
Of his fond partner, silent in the nest.
—"Ah why," said Ellen, sighing to herself,

"Why do not words, and kiss, and solemn pledge, 870

And nature that is kind in woman's breast,

And reason that in man is wise and good,
And fear of him who is a righteous judge
Why do not these prevail for human life,
To keep two hearts together, that began
Their spring-time with one love, and that have need 876

Of mutual pity and forgiveness, sweet
To grant, or be received; while that poor bird—

O come and hear him! Thou who hast to me

Been faithless, hear him, though a lowly creature, 880

One of God's simple children that yet know not

The universal Parent, how he sings
As if he wished the firmament of heaven
Should listen, and give back to him the voice

Of his triumphant constancy and love;
The proclamation that he makes, how far 886

His darkness doth transcend our fickle light!"

'Such was the tender passage, not by me

Repeated without loss of simple phrase,
Which I perused, even as the words had been 890

Committed by forsaken Ellen's hand
To the blank margin of a Valentine,
Bedropped with tears. 'Twill please you to be told

That, studiously withdrawing from the eye 894

Of all companionship, the Sufferer yet
In lonely reading found a meek resource:
How thankful for the warmth of summer days,

When she could slip into the cottage-barn,

And find a secret oratory there;

Or, in the garden, under friendly veil 900
Of their long twilight, pore upon her book
By the last lingering help of the open sky
Until dark night dismissed her to her bed!
Thus did a waking fancy sometimes lose
The unconquerable pang of despised love.

'A kindlier passion opened on her soul
When that poor Child was born. Upon its face

She gazed as on a pure and spotless gift
Of unexpected promise, where a grief

Or dread was all that had been thought of,—joy 910

Far livelier than bewildered traveller feels,
Amid a perilous waste that all night long
Hath harassed him toiling through fearful storm,

When he beholds the first pale speck serene

Of day-spring, in the gloomy east, revealed, 915

And greets it with thanksgiving. "Till this hour,"

Thus, in her Mother's hearing Ellen spake,
"There was a stony region in my heart;
But He, at whose command the parched rock

Was smitten, and poured forth a quenching stream, 920

Hath softened that obduracy, and made
Unlooked-for gladness in the desert place,
To save the perishing; and, henceforth, I breathe

The air with cheerful spirit, for thy sake,
My Infant! and for that good Mother dear, 925

Who bore me; and hath prayed for me in vain;—

Yet not in vain; it shall not be in vain."

She spake, nor was the assurance unfulfilled;

And if heart-rending thoughts would oft return,

They stayed not long.—The blameless Infant grew; 930

The Child whom Ellen and her Mother loved

They soon were proud of; tended it and
nursed;

A soothing comforter, although forlorn;
Like a poor singing-bird from distant
lands;

Or a choice shrub, which he, who passes
by

With vacant mind, not seldom may ob-
serve

Fair-flowering in a thinly-peopled house,
Whose window, somewhat sadly, it
adorns.

'Through four months' space the Infant
drew its food

From the maternal breast; then scruples
rose;

Thoughts, which the rich are free from,
came and crossed

The fond affection. She no more could
bear

By her offence to lay a twofold weight
On a kind parent willing to forget

Their slender means: so, to that parent's
care

Trusting her child, she left their common
home,

And undertook with dutiful content
A Foster-mother's office.

'Tis, perchance,
Unknown to you that in these simple
vales

The natural feeling of equality

Is by domestic service unimpaired;
Yet, though such service be, with us,
removed

From sense of degradation, not the less
The ungentle mind can easily find means

To impose severe restraints and laws un-
just,

Which hapless Ellen now was doomed to
feel:

For (blinded by an over-anxious dread
Of such excitement and divided thought

As with her office would but ill accord)
The pair, whose infant she was bound to
nurse,

Forbad her all communion with her own:
Week after week, the mandate they en-
forced.

—So near! yet not allowed upon that sight
To fix her eyes—alas! 'twas hard to bear!

But worse affliction must be borne—far
worse;

For 'tis Heaven's will—that, after a disease
Begun and ended within three days' space,
Her child should die; as Ellen now ex-
claimed,

Her own—deserted child!—Once, only
once,

She saw it in that mortal malady;

And, on the burial-day, could scarcely
gain

Permission to attend its obsequies.

She reached the house, last of the funeral
train;

And some one, as she entered, having
chanced

To urge unthinkingly their prompt depar-
ture,

"Nay," said she, with commanding look,
a spirit

Of anger never seen in her before,
"Nay, ye must wait my time!" and down
she sat,

And by the unclosed coffin kept her seat
Weeping and looking, looking on and
weeping,

Upon the last sweet slumber of her Child,
Until at length her soul was satisfied.

'You see the Infant's Grave; and to
this spot,

The Mother, oft as she was sent abroad,
On whatsoever errand, urged her steps:

Hither she came; here stood, and some-
times knelt

In the broad day, a rueful Magdalene!
So call her; for not only she bewailed

A mother's loss, but mourned in bitter-
ness

Her own transgression; penitent sincere
As ever raised to heaven a streaming
eye!

—At length the parents of the foster-
child,

Noting that in despite of their commands
She still renewed and could not but renew

Those visitations, ceased to send her
forth;

Or, to the garden's narrow bounds, con-
fined.

I failed not to remind them that they erred;
For holy Nature might not thus be
crossed,

Thus wronged in woman's breast: in vain
I pleaded—

But the green stalk of Ellen's life was
snapped,

And the flower drooped; as every eye
could see,

It hung its head in mortal languishment.
—Aided by this appearance, I at length
Prevailed; and, from those bonds released,
she went

Home to her mother's house.

The Youth was fled;
The rash betrayer could not face the
shame

Or sorrow which his senseless guilt had
caused;

And little would his presence, or proof
given

Of a relenting soul, have now availed;
For, like a shadow, he was passed away

From Ellen's thoughts; had perished to
her mind

For all concerns of fear, or hope, or love,

Save only those which to their common shame,

And to his moral being appertained:
Hope from that quarter would, I know,
have brought

A heavenly comfort; there she recognised
An unrelaxing bond, a mutual need;
There, and, as seemed, there only.

She had built,
Her fond maternal heart had built, a nest
In blindness all too near the river's edge;
That work a summer flood with hasty
swell

Had swept away; and now her Spirit
longed

For its last flight to heaven's security.

—The bodily frame wasted from day to
day;

Meanwhile, relinquishing all other cares,
Her mind she strictly tutored to find
peace

And pleasure in endurance. Much she
thought,

And much she read; and brooded feel-
ingly

Upon her own unworthiness. To me,
As to a spiritual comforter and friend,
Her heart she opened; and no pains were
spared

To mitigate, as gently as I could,
The sting of self-reproach, with healing
words.

Meek Saint! through patience glorified
on earth!

In whom, as by her lonely hearth she
sate,

The ghastly face of cold decay put on
A sun-like beauty, and appeared divine!

May I not mention—that, within those
walls,

In due observance of her pious wish,
The congregation joined with me in
prayer

For her soul's good? Nor was that office
vain.

—Much did she suffer: but, if any friend,
Beholding her condition, at the sight

Gave way to words of pity or complaint,
She stilled them with a prompt reproof,

and said,

"He who afflicts me knows what I can
bear;

And, when I fail, and can endure no more,
Will mercifully take me to himself."

So, through the cloud of death, her Spirit
passed

Into that pure and unknown world of
love

Where injury cannot come:—and here is
laid

The mortal Body by her Infant's side.'

The Vicar ceased; and downcast looks
made known

That each had listened with his inmost
heart.

For me, the emotion scarcely was less
strong

Or less benign than that which I had felt
When seated near my venerable Friend,

Under those shady elms, from him I
heard

The story that retraced the slow decline
Of Margaret, sinking on the lonely heath

With the neglected house to which she
clung.

—I noted that the Solitary's cheek
Confessed the power of nature.—Pleased
though sad,

More pleased than sad, the grey-haired
Wanderer sate;

Thanks to his pure imaginative soul

Capacious and serene; his blameless life,
His knowledge, wisdom, love of truth,

and love
Of human kind! He was it who first broke
The pensive silence, saying:—

'Blest are they
Whose sorrow rather is to suffer wrong

Than to do wrong, albeit themselves have
erred.

This tale gives proof that Heaven most
gently deals

With such, in their affliction.—Ellen's fate,
Her tender spirit, and her contrite heart,

Call to my mind dark hints which I have
heard

Of one who died within this vale, by doom
Heavier, as his offence was heavier far.

Where, Sir, I pray you, where are laid the
bones

Of Wilfred Armathwaite?'

The Vicar answered,
'In that green nook, close by the Church-
yard wall,

Beneath yon hawthorn, planted by myself
In memory and for warning, and in sign

Of sweetness where dire anguish had been
known,

Of reconciliation after deep offence—
There doth he rest. No theme his fate
supplies

For the smooth glozings of the indulgent
world;

Nor need the windings of his devious
course

Be here retraced;—enough that, by mis-
hap

And venial error, robbed of competence,
And her obsequious shadow, peace of
mind,

He craved a substitute in troubled joy;
Against his conscience rose in arms, and,
braving

Divine displeasure, broke the marriage-
vow.

That which he had been weak enough to
do

Was misery in remembrance: he was
stung, 1095

Stung by his inward thoughts, and by the
smiles

Of wife and children stung to agony.
Wretched at home, he gained no peace
abroad;

Ranged through the mountains, slept
upon the earth, 1099

Asked comfort of the open air, and found
No quiet in the darkness of the night,
No pleasure in the beauty of the day.

His flock he slighted: his paternal fields
Became a clog to him, whose spirit wished
To fly—but whither! And this gracious

Church, 1105

That wears a look so full of peace and
hope

And love, benignant mother of the vale,
How fair amid her brood of cottages!

She was to him a sickness and reproach.
Much to the last remained unknown: but
this 1110

Is sure, that through remorse and grief
he died;

Though pitied among men, absolved by
God,

He could not find forgiveness in himself;
Nor could endure the weight of his own
shame.

'Here rests a Mother. But from her I
turn 1115

And from her grave.—Behold—upon that
ridge,

That, stretching holdly from the moun-
tain side,

Carries into the centre of the vale
Its rocks and woods—the Cottage where
she dwelt;

And where yet dwells her faithful Partner,
left 1120

(Full eight years past) the solitary prop
Of many helpless Children. I begin

With words that might be prelude to a
tale

Of sorrow and dejection; but I feel
No sadness, when I think of what mine
eyes 1125

See daily in that happy family,
—Bright garland form they for the pen-
sive brow

Of their undrooping Father's widowhood,
Those six fair Daughters, budding yet—
not one,

Not one of all the band, a full-blown
flower. 1130

Deprest, and desolate of soul, as once
That Father was, and filled with anxious
fear,

Now, by experience taught, he stands
assured,

That God, who takes away, yet takes not
half

Of what he seems to take; or gives it back,
Not to our prayer, but far beyond our
prayer; 1136

He gives it—the boon produce of a soil
Which our endeavours have refused to
till,

And hope hath never watered. The Abode,
Whose grateful owner can attest these
truths, 1140

Even were the object nearer to our sight,
Would seem in no distinction to surpass
The rudest habitations. Ye might think
That it had sprung self-raised from earth,
or grown

Out of the living rock, to be adorned 1145

By nature only; but, if thither led,
Ye would discover, then, a studious work
Of many fancies, prompting many hands.

'Brought from the woods the honey-
suckle twines

Around the porch, and seems, in that trim
place, 1150

A plant no longer wild; the cultured rose
There blossoms, strong in health, and will
be soon

Roof-high; the wild pink crowns the
garden-wall,

And with the flowers are intermingled
stones

Sparry and bright, rough scatterings of
the hills. 1155

These ornaments, that fade not with the
year,

A hardy Girl continues to provide;
Who, mounting fearlessly the rocky
heights,

Her Father's prompt attendant, does for
him

All that a boy could do, but with delight
More keen and prouder daring; yet hath
she, 1161

Within the garden, like the rest, a bed
For her own flowers and favourite herbs,
a space,

By sacred charter, holden for her use.
—These, and whatever else the garden
bears 1165

Of fruit or flower, permission asked or not,
I freely gather; and my leisure draws
A not unfrequent pastime from the hum
Of bees around their range of sheltered
hives

Busy in that enclosure; while the rill,
That sparkling thrids the rocks, attunes
his voice 1171

To the pure course of human life which
there

Flows on in solitude. But, when the
gloom

Of night is falling round my steps, then
most

This Dwelling charms me; often I stop
short, 1175

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK VI

Who could refrain?) and feed by stealth
my sight
With prospect of the company within,
Laid open through the blazing window:—
there
I see the eldest Daughter at her wheel
Spinning amain, as if to overtake 1180
The never-halting time; or, in her turn,
Teaching some Novice of the sisterhood
That skill in this or other household
work,
Which, from her Father's honoured hand,
herself,

While she was yet a little-one, had
learned. 1185
Mild Man! he is not gay, but they are
gay;
And the whole house seems filled with
gaiety.
—Thrice happy, then, the Mother may be
deemed,
The Wife, from whose consolatory grave
I turned, that ye in mind might witness
where, 1190
And how, her Spirit yet survives on
earth!

BOOK SEVENTH

THE CHURCHYARD AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.—(CONTINUED)

ARGUMENT

Impression of these Narratives upon the Author's mind.—Pastor invited to give account of certain Graves that lie apart.—Clergyman and his Family.—Fortunate influence of change of situation.—Activity in extreme old age.—Another Clergyman, a character of resolute Virtue.—Lamentations over mis-directed applause.—Instance of less exalted excellence in a deaf man.—Elevated character of a blind man.—Reflection upon Blindness.—Interrupted by a Peasant who passes—his animal cheerfulness and careless vivacity.—He occasions a digression on the fall of beautiful and interesting Trees.—A female Infant's Grave.—Joy at her Birth.—Sorrow at her Departure.—A youthful Peasant—his patriotic enthusiasm and distinguished qualities—his untimely death.—Exultation of the Wanderer, as a patriot, in this Picture.—Solitary how affected.—Monument of a Knight.—Traditions concerning him.—Peroration of the Wanderer on the transitoriness of things and the revolutions of society.—Hints at his own past Calling.—Thanks the Pastor.

WHILE thus from theme to theme the
Historian passed,
The words he uttered, and the scene that
lay
Before our eyes, awakened in my mind
Vivid remembrance of those long-past
hours;
When, in the hollow of some shadowy
vale, 5
(What time the splendour of the setting
sun
Lay beautiful on Snowdon's sovereign
brow,
On Cader Idris, or huge Penmanmaur)
A wandering Youth, I listened with de-
light
To pastoral melody or warlike air, 10
Drawn from the chords of the ancient
British harp
By some accomplished Master, while he
sate
Amid the quiet of the green recess,
And there did inexhaustibly dispense
An interchange of soft or solemn tunes, 15
Tender or blithe; now, as the varying
mood
Of his own spirit urged,—now, as a voice
From youth or maiden, or some honoured
chief
Of his compatriot villagers (that hung
Around him, drinking in the impassioned
notes 20

Of the time-hallowed minstrelsy) required
For their heart's ease or pleasure. Strains
of power
Were they, to seize and occupy the sense;
But to a higher mark than song can reach
Rose this pure eloquence. And, when the
stream 25
Which overflowed the soul was passed
away,
A consciousness remained that it had left,
Deposited upon the silent shore
Of memory, images and precious thoughts,
That shall not die, and cannot be
destroyed. 30
'These grassy heaps lie amicably close,'
Said I, 'like surges heaving in the wind
Along the surface of a mountain pool:
Whence comes it, then, that yonder we
behold
Five graves, and only five, that rise to-
gether 35
Unsociably sequestered, and encroaching
On the smooth playground of the village-
school?'
The Vicar answered,—'No disdainful
pride
In them who rest beneath, nor any course
Of strange or tragic accident, hath helped
To place those hillocks in that lonely
guise. 41

—Once more look forth, and follow with
your sight

The length of road that from yon moun-
tain's base

Through bare enclosures stretches, 'till
its line

Is lost within a little tuft of trees; 45

Then, reappearing in a moment, quits

The cultured fields; and up the heathy
waste,

Mounts, as you see, in mazes serpentine,
Led towards an easy outlet of the vale.

That little shady spot, that sylvan tuft, 50

By which the road is hidden, also hides

A cottage from our view; though I discern

(Ye scarcely can) amid its sheltering trees

The smokeless chimney-top.—

All unembowered

And naked stood that lowly Parsonage 55

(For such in truth it is, and appertains

To a small Chapel in the vale beyond)

When hither came its last Inhabitant.

Rough and forbidding were the choicest

roads

By which our northern wilds could then

be crossed; 60

And into most of these secluded vales

Was no access for wain, heavy or light.

So, at his dwelling-place the Priest arrived

With store of household goods, in pan-

niers slung

On sturdy horses graced with jingling

bells, 65

And on the back of more ignoble beast;

That, with like burthen of effects most

prized

Or easiest carried, closed the motley train.

Young was I then, a schoolboy of eight

years;

But still, methinks, I see them as they

passed 70

In order, drawing toward their wished-

for home.

—Rocked by the motion of a trusty ass

Two ruddy children hung, a well-poised

freight,

Each in his basket nodding drowsily;

Their bonnets, I remember, wreathed with

flowers, 75

Which told it was the pleasant month of

June;

And, close behind, the comely Matron

rode,

A woman of soft speech and gracious

smile,

And with a lady's mien.—From far they

came,

Even from Northumbrian hills; yet theirs

had been 80

A merry journey, rich in pastime, cheered

By music, prank, and laughter-stirring

jest;

And freak put on, and arch word dropped

—to swell

The cloud of fancy and uncouth surmise

That gathered round the slowly-moving

train. 85

—“Whence do they come? and with what

errand charged?

Belong they to the fortune-telling tribe

Who pitch their tents under the green-

wood tree?

Or Strollers are they, furnished to enact

Fair Rosamond, and the Children of the

Wood, 90

And, by that whiskered tabby's aid, set

forth

The lucky venture of sage Whittington,

When the next village hears the show

announced

By blast of trumpet?—Plenteous was the

growth

Of such conjectures, overheard, or seen 95

On many a staring countenance portrayed

Of boor or burgher, as they marched

along.

And more than once their steadiness of

face

Was put to proof, and exercise supplied

To their inventive humour, by stern looks,

And questions in authoritative tone, 101

From some staid guardian of the public

peace,

Checking the sober steed on which he

rode,

In his suspicious wisdom; oftener still,

By notice indirect, or blunt demand 105

From traveller halting in his own despite,

A simple curiosity to ease:

Of which adventures, that beguiled and

cheered

Their grave migration, the good pair

would tell,

With undiminished glee, in hoary age. 110

‘A Priest he was by function; but his

course

From his youth up, and high as man-

hood's noon,

(The hour of life to which he then was

brought)

Had been irregular, I might say, wild;

By books unsteady, by his pastoral care

Too little checked. An active, ardent

mind; 116

A fancy pregnant with resource and

scheme

To cheat the sadness of a rainy day;

Hands apt for all ingenious arts and

games;

A generous spirit, and a body strong 120

To cope with stoutest champions of the

bow!

Had earned for him sure welcome, and

the rights

Of a prized visitant, in the jolly hall

Of country 'squire; or at the statelier

board

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK VII

Of duke or earl, from scenes of courtly
pomp¹²⁵
Withdrawn,—to while away the summer
hours
In condescension among rural guests.

'With these high comrades he had
revelled long,
Frolicked industriously, a simple Clerk
By hopes of coming patronage beguiled
Till the heart sickened. So, each loftier
aim¹³¹
Abandoning and all his showy friends,
For a life's stay (slender it was, but sure)
He turned to this secluded chapelry;
That had been offered to his doubtful
choice¹³⁵
By an unthought-of patron. Bleak and
bare
They found the cottage, their allotted
home;
Naked without, and rude within; a spot
With which the Cure not long had been
endowed:
And far remote the chapel stood,—re-
mote,¹⁴⁰
And, from his Dwelling, unapproachable,
Save through a gap high in the hills, an
opening
Shadeless and shelterless, by driving
showers
Frequented, and beset with howling
winds.
Yet cause was none, whate'er regret might
hang¹⁴⁵
On his own mind, to quarrel with the
choice
Or the necessity that fixed him here;
Apart from old temptations, and con-
strained
To punctual labour in his sacred charge.
See him a constant preacher to the poor!
And visiting, though not with saintly
zeal,¹⁵¹
Yet, when need was, with no reluctant
will,
The sick in body, or distress in mind;
And, by as salutary change, compelled
To rise from timely sleep, and meet the
day¹⁵⁵
With no engagement, in his thoughts,
more proud
Or splendid than his garden could afford,
His fields, or mountains by the heath-
cock ranged,
Or the wild brooks; from which he now
returned
Contented to partake the quiet meal¹⁶⁰
Of his own board, where sat his gentle
Mate
And three fair Children, plentifully fed
Though simply, from their little house-
hold farm;
Nor wanted timely treat of fish or fowl

By nature yielded to his practised hand;—
To help the small but certain comings-in
Of that spare benefice. Yet not the less
Theirs was a hospitable board, and theirs
A charitable door.

So days and years
Passed on;—the inside of that rugged
house¹⁷⁰
Was trimmed and brightened by the
Matron's care,
And gradually enriched with things of
price,
Which might be lacked for use or orna-
ment.
What, though no soft and costly sofa
there
Insidiously stretched out its lazy length,
And no vain mirror glittered upon the
walls,¹⁷⁶
Yet were the windows of the low abode
By shutters weather-fenced, which at
once
Repelled the storm and deadened its loud
roar.
Their snow-white curtains hung in decent
folds;¹⁸⁰
Tough moss, and long-enduring mountain-
plants,
That creep along the ground with sinuous
trail,
Were nicely braided; and composed a
work
Like Indian mats, that with appropriate
grace
Lay at the threshold and the inner doors;
And a fair carpet, woven of homespun
wool¹⁸⁶
But tintured daintily with florid hues,
For seemliness and warmth, on festal days,
Covered the smooth blue slabs of moun-
tain-stone
With which the parlour-floor, in simplest
guise¹⁹⁰
Of pastoral homesteads, had been long
inlaid.

'Those pleasing works the Housewife's
skill produced:
Meanwhile the unsedentary Master's hand
Was busier with his task—to rid, to plant,
To rear for food, for shelter, and delight;
A thriving covert! And when wishes,
formed¹⁹⁶
In youth, and sanctioned by the ripen-
mind,
Restored me to my native valley, here
To end my days; well pleased was I to
see
The once-bare cottage, on the mountain-
side,²⁰⁰
Screen'd from assault of every bitter
blast;
While the dark shadows of the summer
leaves

Danced in the breeze, chequering its mossy roof. Suddenly then they disappeared: not

Time, which had thus afforded willing help Had summer scorched the fields; not twice had fallen,

To beautify with nature's fairest growths On those high peaks, the first autumnal snow,

This rustic tenement, had gently shed, 206 Before the greedy visiting was closed, 250 Upon its Master's frame, a wintry grace; And the long-privileged house left empty

The comeliness of unenfeebled age. —sweet As by a plague. Yet no rapacious plague Had been among them; all was gentle death,

Retained a flashing eye, a burning palm, One after one, with intervals of peace. A stirring foot, a head which beat at nights 211 A happy consummation! an accord 255

Upon its pillow with a thousand schemes. Sweet, perfect, to be wished for! save that Few likings had he dropped, few pleasures here

Generous and charitable, prompt to serve; Was something which to mortal sense And still his harsher passions kept their hold— 215 Like harshness,—that the old grey-headed Sire,

Anger and indignation. Still he loved The oldest, he was taken last, survived When the meek Partner of his age, his Son,

Of long-past banquetings with high-born friends: His Daughter, and that late and high-prized gift, 261

Then, from those lulling fits of vain delight 219 His little smiling Grandchild, were no more.

Uproused by recollected injury, railed "All gone, all vanished! he deprived and bare,

At their false ways disdainfully,—and oft In bitterness, and with a threatening eye How will he face the remnant of his life?

Of fire, incensed beneath its hoary brow. What will become of him?" we said, and mused 265

—Those transports, with staid looks of pure good-will, In sad conjectures—"Shall we meet him now

And with soft smile, his consort would reprove. 225 Haunting with rod and line the craggy brooks?

She, far behind him in the race of years, Or shall we overhear him, as we pass, Striving to entertain the lonely hours

Yet keeping her first mildness, was advanced With music?" (for he had not ceased to touch 270

Far nearer, in the habit of her soul, The harp or viol which himself had framed,

To that still region whither all are bound. For their sweet purposes, with perfect skill.) 270

Him might we liken to the setting sun 230 "What titles will he keep? will he remain Musician, gardener, builder, mechanist,

As seen not seldom on some gusty day, A planter, and a rearer from the seed? 275

Struggling and bold, and shining from the west Even to the last!"—Such was he, un-subdued.

With an inconstant and unmellowed light; But Heaven was gracious; yet a little while,

She was a soft attendant cloud, that hung And this Survivor, with his cheerful throng

As if with wish to veil the restless orb; Of open projects, and his inward hoard

From which it did itself imbibe a ray 236 Of ununsung griefs, too many and too keen, 281

Of pleasing lustre.—But no more of this; Was overcome by unexpected sleep, In one blest moment. Like a shadow

I better love to sprinkle on the sod That now divides the pair, or rather say, thrown

That still unites them, praises, like heaven's dew, 240 Softly and lightly from a passing cloud, Death fell upon him, while reclined he lay 285

Without reserve descending upon both. 'Our very first in eminence of years

This old Man stood, the patriarch of the Vale! In one blest moment. Like a shadow

And, to his unmolested mansion, death Had never come, through space of forty years; 245

Sparing both old and young in that abode.

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK VII]

For noontide solace on the summer grass,
The warm lap of his mother earth; and so,
Their lenient term of separation past,
That family (whose graves you there be-
hold)

By yet a higher privilege once more 290
Were gathered to each other.'

And silence waited on these closing
words;

Until the Wanderer (whether moved by
fear

Lest in those passages of life were some
That might have touched the sick heart
of his Friend 295

Too nearly, or intent to reinforce
His own firm spirit in degree deprest
By tender sorrow for our mortal state)
Thus silence broke:—'Behold a thought-
less Man

From vice and premature decay pre-
served 300

By useful habits, to a fitter soil
Transplanted ere too late.—The hermit,
lodged

Amid the untrodden desert, tells his beads,
With each repeating its allotted prayer,
And thus divides and thus relieves the
time; 305

Smooth task, with *his* compared, whose
mind could string,
Not scantily, bright minutes on the
thread

Of keen domestic anguish; and beguile
A solitude, unchosen, unprofessed;
Till gentlest death released him.

Far from us
Be the desire—too curiously to ask 311
How much of this is but the blind result
Of cordial spirits and vital temperament,
And what to higher powers is justly due.
But you, Sir, know that in a neighbouring
vale 315

A Priest abides before whose life such
doubts

Fall to the ground; whose gifts of nature
lie

Retired from notice, lost in attributes
Of reason, honourably effaced by debts
Which her poor treasure-house is content
to owe, 320

And cowers over her dominion gained,
To which her frowardness must needs
submit.

In this one Man is shown a temperance—
proof

Against all trials; industry severe
And constant as the motion of the day;
Stern self-denial round him spread, with
shade 326

That might be deemed forbidding, did
not there

All generous feelings flourish and rejoice;
Forbearance, charity in deed and thought,

And resolution competent to take 330
Out of the bosom of simplicity

All that her holy customs recommend,
And the best ages of the world prescribe,
—Preaching, administering, in every work
Of his sublime vocation, in the walks 335
Of worldly intercourse between man and
man,

And in his humble dwelling, he appears
A labourer, with moral virtue girt,
With spiritual graces, like a glory,
crowned.'

'Doubt can be none,' the Pastor said,
'for whom 340

This portraiture is sketched. The great,
the good,

The well-beloved, the fortunate, the
wise,—

These titles emperors and chiefs have
borne,

Honour assumed or given: and him, the
WONDERFUL,

Our simple shepherds, speaking from the
heart, 345

Deservedly have styled.—From his abode
In a dependent chapelry that lies

Behind yon hill, a poor and rugged wild,
Which in his soul he lovingly embraced,

And, having once espoused, would never
quit; 350

Into its graveyard will ere long be borne
That lowly, great, good Man. A simple
stone

May cover him; and by its help, per-
chance,

A century shall hear his name pro-
nounced,

With images attendant on the sound; 355
Then, shall the slowly-gathering twilight
close

In utter night; and of his course remain
No cognizable vestiges, no more

Than of this breath, which shapes itself
in words

To speak of him, and instantly dissolves.'

The Pastor pressed by thoughts which
round his theme 361

Still linger'd, after a brief pause, resumed;
'Noise is there not enough in doleful war,

But that the heaven-born poet must stand
forth,

And lend the echoes of his sacred shell,
To multiply and aggravate the din? 366

Pangs are there not enough in hopeless
love—

And, in requited passion, all too much
Of turbulence, anxiety, and fear— 369

But that the minstrel of the rural shade
Must tune his pipe, insidiously to nurse

The perturbation in the suffering breast,
And propagate its kind, far as he may?

—Ah who (and with such rapture as befits

The hallowed theme) will rise and celebrate
 The good man's purposes and deeds; ³⁷⁵
 His struggles, his discomfitures deplore,
 His triumphs hail, and glorify his end;
 That virtue, like the fumes and vapoury
 clouds
 Through fancy's heat redounding in the
 brain, ³⁸⁰
 And like the soft infections of the heart,
 By charm of measured words may spread
 o'er field,
 Hamlet, and town; and piety survive
 Upon the lips of men in hall or bower;
 Not for reproof, but high and warm
 delight, ³⁸⁵
 And grave encouragement, by song in-
 spired?
 —Vain thought! but wherefore murmur
 or repine?
 The memory of the just survives in
 heaven:
 And, without sorrow, will the ground
 receive ³⁸⁹
 That venerable clay. Meanwhile the best
 Of what lies here confines us to degrees
 In excellence less difficult to reach,
 And milder worth: nor need we travel far
 From those to whom our last regards
 were paid,
 For such example. Almost at the root
 Of that tall pine, the shadow of whose
 bare ³⁹⁶
 And slender stem, while here I sit at eve,
 Oft stretches toward me, like a long
 straight path
 Traced faintly in the greensward; there,
 beneath
 A plain blue stone, a gentle Dalesman
 lies, ⁴⁰⁰
 From whom, in early childhood, was
 withdrawn
 The precious gift of hearing. He grew up
 From year to year in loneliness of soul;
 And this deep mountain-valley was to him
 Soundless, with all its streams. The bird
 of dawn ⁴⁰⁵
 Did never rouse this Cottager from sleep
 With startling summons; not for his
 delight
 The vernal cuckoo shouted; not for him
 Murmured the labouring bee. When
 stormy winds
 Were working the broad bosom of the
 lake ⁴¹⁰
 Into a thousand thousand sparkling
 waves,
 Rocking the trees, or driving cloud on
 cloud
 Along the sharp edge of yon lofty crags,
 The agitated scene before his eye
 Was silent as a picture: evermore ⁴¹⁵

Were all things silent, wheresoe'er he
 moved.
 Yet, by the solace of his own pure
 thoughts
 Upheld, he duteously pursued the round
 Of rural labours; the steep mountain-side
 Ascended, with his staff and faithful
 dog; ⁴²⁰
 The plough he guided, and the scythe he
 swayed;
 And the ripe corn before his sickle fell
 Among the jocund reapers. For himself,
 All watchful and industrious as he was,
 He wrought not: neither field nor flock
 he owned: ⁴²⁵
 No wish for wealth had place within his
 mind;
 Nor husband's love, nor father's hope or
 care.
 'Though born a younger brother, need
 was none
 That from the floor of his paternal home
 He should depart, to plant himself anew.
 And when, mature in manhood, he be-
 held ⁴³¹
 His parents laid in earth, no loss ensued
 Of rights to him; but he remained well
 pleased,
 By the pure bond of independent love,
 An inmate of a second family; ⁴³⁵
 The fellow-labourer and friend of him
 To whom the small inheritance had fallen.
 —Nor deem that his mild presence was a
 weight
 That pressed upon his brother's house;
 for books
 Were ready comrades whom he could not
 tire; ⁴⁴⁰
 Of whose society the blameless Man
 Was never satiate. Their familiar voice,
 Even to old age, with unabated charm
 Beguiled his leisure hours; refreshed his
 thoughts;
 Beyond its natural elevation raised ⁴⁴⁵
 His introverted spirit; and bestowed
 Upon his life an outward dignity
 Which all acknowledged. The dark
 winter night,
 The stormy day, each had its own re-
 source;
 Song of the muses, sage historic tale, ⁴⁵⁰
 Science severe, or word of holy Writ
 Announcing immortality and joy
 To the assembled spirits of just men
 Made perfect, and from injury secure.
 —Thus soothed at home, thus busy in the
 field, ⁴⁵⁵
 To no perverse suspicion he gave way,
 No languor, peevishness, nor vain com-
 plaint:
 And they, who were about him, did not
 fail
 In reverence, or in courtesy; they prized

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK VII]

His gentle manners: and his peaceful
smile, 460

The gleams of his slow-varying countenance,

Were met with answering sympathy and love.

'At length, when sixty years and five
were told,

A slow disease insensibly consumed

The powers of nature: and a few short
steps 465

Of friends and kindred bore him from his home

(Yon cottage shaded by the woody crags)
To the profounder stillness of the grave.

—Nor was his funeral denied the grace
Of many tears, virtuous and thoughtful
grief; 470

Heart-sorrow rendered sweet by gratitude.
And now that monumental stone pre-
serves

His name, and unambitiously relates
How long, and by what kindly outward
aids, 474

And in what pure contentedness of mind,
The sad privation was by him endured.

—And yon tall pine-tree, whose compos-
ing sound

Was wasted on the good Man's living ear,
Hath now its own peculiar sanctity;

And, at the touch of every wandering
breeze, 480

Murmurs, not idly, o'er his peaceful grave.

'Soul-cheering Light, most bountiful
of things!

Guide of our way, mysterious comforter!
Whose sacred influence, spread through
earth and heaven,

We all too thanklessly participate, 485
Thy gifts were utterly withheld from him
Whose place of rest is near yon ivied
porch.

Yet, of the wild brooks ask if he com-
plained;

Ask of the channelled rivers if they held
A safer, easier, more determined, course.

What terror doth it strike into the mind
To think of one, blind and alone, ad-
vancing 492

Straight toward some precipice's airy
brink!

But, timely warned, *He* would have stayed
his steps,

Protected, say enlightened, by his ear;
And on the very edge of vacancy 496

Not more endangered than a man whose
eye

Beholds the gulf beneath.—No floweret
blooms

Throughout the lofty range of these rough
hills,

Nor in the woods, that could from him
conceal 500

Its birthplace; none whose figure did not
live

Upon his touch. The bowels of the earth
Enriched with knowledge his industrious
mind;

The ocean paid him tribute from the
stores

Lodged in her bosom; and, by science
led, 505

His genius mounted to the plains of
heaven.

—Methinks I see him—how his eye-balls
rolled,

Beneath his ample brow, in darkness
paired,—

But each instinct with spirit; and the
frame

Of the whole countenance alive with
thought, 510

Fancy, and understanding; while the
voice

Discoursed of natural or moral truth
With eloquence, and such authentic
power,

That, in his presence, humbler knowledge
stood

Abashed, and tender pity overawed.' 515

'A noble—and, to unreflecting minds,
A marvellous spectacle,' the Wanderer
said,

'Beings like these present! But proof
abounds

Upon the earth that faculties, which seem
Extinguished, do not, *therefore*, cease
to be. 520

And to the mind among her powers of
sense

This transfer is permitted,—not alone
That the bereft their recompense may
win;

But for remoter purposes of love 524
And charity; nor last nor least for this,
That to the imagination may be given
A type and shadow of an awful truth;

How, likewise, under sufferance divine,
Darkness is banished from the realms of
death,

By man's imperishable spirit, quelled. 530
Unto the men who see not as we see
Futurity was thought, in ancient times,
To be laid open, and they prophesied.

And know we not that from the blind
have flowed 534

The highest, holiest, raptures of the lyre:
And wisdom married to immortal verse?'

Among the humbler Worthies, at our
feet

Lying insensible to human praise,
Love, or regret,—*whose* lineaments would
next

Have been portrayed, I guess not; but it
chanced 540

That, near the quiet churchyard where we
 sate,
 A team of horses, with a ponderous freight
 Pressing behind, adown a rugged slope,
 Whose sharp descent confounded their
 array,
 Came at that moment, ringing noisily. 545
 'Here,' said the Pastor, 'do we muse,
 and mourn
 The waste of death; and lo! the giant oak
 Stretched on his bier—that massy timber
 wain;
 Nor fail to note the Man who guides the
 team.'

He was a peasant of the lowest class:
 Grey locks profusely round his temples
 hung 551
 In clustering curls, like ivy, which the
 bite
 Of winter cannot thin; the fresh air
 lodged
 Within his cheek, as light within a cloud;
 And he returned our greeting with a
 smile. 555
 When he had passed, the Solitary spake;
 'A Man he seems of cheerful yesterdays
 And confident to-morrows; with a face
 Not worldly-minded, for it bears too much
 Of Nature's impress,—gaiety and health,
 Freedom and hope; but keen, withal, and
 shrewd. 561
 His gestures note,—and hark! his tones
 of voice
 Are all vivacious as his mien and looks.'

The Pastor answered, 'You have read
 him well.
 Year after year is added to his store 565
 With *silent* increase: summers, winters—
 past,
 Past or to come; yea, boldly might I say,
 Ten summers and ten winters of a space
 That lies beyond life's ordinary bounds,
 Upon his sprightly vigour cannot fix 570
 The obligation of an anxious mind,
 A pride in having, or a fear to lose;
 Possessed like outskirts of some large
 domain,
 By any one more thought of than by him
 Who holds the land in fee, its careless
 lord! 575
 Yet is the creature rational, endowed
 With foresight; hears, too, every sabbath
 day,
 The Christian promise with attentive ear;
 Nor will, I trust, the Majesty of Heaven
 Reject the incense offered up by him, 580
 Though of the kind which beasts and
 birds present
 In grove or pasture; cheerfulness of soul,
 From trepidation and repining free.
 How many scrupulous worshippers fall
 down

Upon their knees, and daily homage
 pay 585
 Less worthy, less religious even, than his!
 'This qualified respect, the old Man's
 due,
 Is paid without reluctance; but in truth,'
 (Said the good Vicar with a fond half-
 smile)
 'I feel at times a motion of despite 590
 Towards one, whose bold contrivances
 and skill,
 As you have seen, bear such conspicuous
 part
 In works of havoc; taking from these
 vales,
 One after one, their proudest ornaments.
 Full oft his doings leave me to deplore
 Tall ash-tree, sown by winds, by vapours
 nursed, 596
 In the dry crannies of the pendent rocks;
 Light birch, aloft upon the horizon's edge.
 A veil of glory for the ascending moon;
 And oak whose roots by noontide dew
 were damped, 600
 And on whose forehead inaccessible
 The raven lodged in safety.—Many a ship
 Launched into Morecambe-bay, to *him*
 hath owed
 Her strong knee-timbers, and the mast
 that bears
 The loftiest of her pendants; He, from
 park 605
 Or forest, fetched the enormous axle-tree
 That whirls (how slow itself!) ten thou-
 sand spindles:
 And the vast engine labouring in the mine,
 Content with meaner prowess, must have
 lacked
 The trunk and body of its marvellous
 strength, 610
 If his undaunted enterprise had failed
 Among the mountain coves.
 Yon household fir,
 A guardian planted to fence off the blast,
 But towering high the roof above, as if
 Its humble destination were forgot— 615
 That sycamore, which annually holds
 Within its shade, as in a stately tent!
 On all sides open to the fanning breeze,
 A grave assemblage, seated while they
 shear
 The fleece-encumbered flock—the JOYFUL
 ELM, 620
 Around whose trunk the maidens dance
 in May—
 And the LORD'S OAK—would plead their
 several rights
 In vain, if he were master of their fate;
 His sentence to the axe would doom
 them all.
 But, green in age and lusty as he is, 625
 And promising to keep his hold on earth

¹ See Note, p. 733.

Less, as might seem, in rivalry with
 men
 Than with the forest's more enduring
 growth,
 His own appointed hour will come at
 last;
 And, like the haughty Spoilers of the
 world,
 This keen Destroyer, in his turn, must
 fall.

'Now from the living pass we once
 again:
 From Age,' the Priest continued, 'turn
 your thoughts;
 From Age, that often unlamented drops,
 And mark that daisied hillock, three
 spans long!
 —Seven lusty Sons sate daily round the
 board
 Of Gold-rill side; and, when the hope had
 ceased
 Of other progeny, a Daughter then
 Was given, the crowning bounty of the
 whole;
 And so acknowledged with a tremulous
 joy
 Felt to the centre of that heavenly calm
 With which by nature every mother's soul
 Is stricken in the moment when her throes
 Are ended, and her ears have heard the
 cry
 Which tells her that a living child is born;
 And she lies conscious, in a blissful rest,
 That the dread storm is weathered by
 them both.

'The Father—him at this unlooked-
 for gift
 A bolder transport seizes. From the side
 Of his bright hearth, and from his open
 door,
 Day after day the gladness is diffused
 To all that come, almost to all that pass;
 Invited, summoned, to partake the cheer
 Spread on the never-empty board, and
 drink
 Health and good wishes to his new-born
 girl,
 From cups replenished by his joyous
 hand.
 —Those seven fair brothers variously were
 moved
 Each by the thoughts best suited to his
 years:
 But most of all and with most thankful
 mind
 The hoary grandsire felt himself enriched:
 A happiness that ebb'd not, but remained
 To fill the total measure of his soul!
 —From the low tenement, his own abode,
 Whither, as to a little private cell,
 He had withdrawn from bustle, care, and
 noise,

To spend the sabbath of old age in peace,
 Once every day he duteously repaired
 To rock the cradle of the slumbering babe:
 For in that female infant's name he heard
 The silent name of his departed wife;
 Heart-stirring music! hourly heard that
 name;
 Full blest he was, "Another Margaret
 Green,"
 Oft did he say, "was come to Gold-rill
 side."

'Oh! pang unthought of, as the precious
 boon
 Itself had been unlooked-for; oh! dire
 stroke
 Of desolating anguish for them all!
 —Just as the Child could totter on the
 floor,
 And, by some friendly finger's help up-
 stayed
 Ranged round the garden walk, while she
 perchance
 Was catching at some novelty of spring,
 Ground-flower, or glossy insect from its
 cell
 Drawn by the sunshine—at that hopeful
 season
 The winds of March, smiting insidiously,
 Raised in the tender passage of the throat
 Viewless obstruction; whence, all unfore-
 warned,
 The household lost their pride and soul's
 delight.
 —But time hath power to soften all re-
 grets,
 And prayer and thought can bring to
 worst distress
 Due resignation. Therefore, though some
 tears
 Fail not to spring from either Parent's
 eye
 Oft as they hear of sorrow like their own,
 Yet this departed Little-one, too long
 The innocent troubler of their quiet, sleeps
 In what may now be called a peaceful
 bed.

'On a bright day—so calm and bright,
 it seemed
 To us, with our sad spirits, heavenly-
 fair—
 These mountains echoed to an unknown
 sound;
 A volley, thrice repeated o'er the Corse
 Let down into the hollow of that grave,
 Whose shelving sides are red with naked
 mould.
 Ye rains of April, duly wet this earth!
 Spare, burning sun of midsummer, these
 sods,
 That they may knit together, and there-
 with
 Our thoughts unite in kindred quietness!

Nor so the Valley shall forget her loss.

Dear Youth, by young and old alike be-
loved, 706

To me as precious as my own!—Green
herbs

May creep (I wish that they would softly
creep)

Over thy last abode, and we may pass
Reminded less imperiously of thee;— 710

The ridge itself may sink into the breast
Of earth, the great abyss, and be no more;

Yet shall not thy remembrance leave our
hearts,

Thy image disappear!

The Mountain-ash 714
No eye can overlook, when 'mid a grove
Of yet unfaded trees she lifts her head

Decked with autumnal berries, that out-
shine

Spring's richest blossoms; and ye may
have marked,

By a brook-side or solitary tarn,
How she her station doth adorn: the
pool 720

Glow at her feet, and all the gloomy
rocks

Are brightened round her. In his native
vale

Such and so glorious did this Youth
appear;

A sight that kindled pleasure in all hearts
By his ingenuous beauty, by the gleam

Of his fair eyes, by his capacious brow,
By all the graces with which nature's hand

Had lavishly arrayed him. As old bards
Tell in their idle songs of wandering gods,

Pan or Apollo, veiled in human form: 730
Yet, like the sweet-breathed violet of the
shade,

Discovered in their own despite to sense
Of mortals (if such fables without blame

May find chance-mention on this sacred
ground)—

So, through a simple rustic garb's dis-
guise, 735

And through the impediment of rural
cares,

In him revealed a scholar's genius shone;
And so, not wholly hidden from men's
sight,

In him the spirit of a hero walked
Our unpretending valley.—How the quoit

Whizzed from the Stripling's arm! If
touched by him, 741

The inglorious football mounted to the
pitch

Of the lark's flight,—or shaped a rainbow
curve,

Aloft, in prospect of the shouting field!
The indefatigable fox had learned 745

To dread his perseverance in the chase.
With admiration would he lift his eyes

To the wide-ruling eagle, and his hand
Was loth to assault the majesty he loved:

Else had the strongest fastnesses proved
weak 750

To guard the royal brood. The sailing
glead,

The wheeling swallow, and the darting
snipe,

The sportive sea-gull dancing with the
waves,

And cautious water-fowl, from distant
climes,

Fixed at their seat, the centre of the
Mere, 755

Were subject to young Oswald's steady
aim,

And lived by his forbearance.

From the coast
Of France a boastful Tyrant hurled his
threats;

Our Country marked the preparation vast
Of hostile forces; and she called—with
voice 760

That filled her plains, that reached her
utmost shores,

And in remotest vales was heard—to
arms!

—Then, for the first time, here you might
have seen

The shepherd's grey to martial scarlet
changed,

That flashed uncouthly through the woods
and fields. 765

Ten hardy Striplings, all in bright attire,
And graced with shining weapons, weekly

marched,
From this lone valley, to a central spot

Where, in assemblage with the flower and
choice

Of the surrounding district, they might
learn 770

The rudiments of war; ten—hardy,
strong,

And valiant; but young Oswald, like a
chief

And yet a modest comrade, led them forth
From their shy solitude, to face the world,

With a gay confidence and seemingly pride;
Measuring the soil beneath their happy
feet 776

Like Youths released from labour, and
yet bound

To most laborious service, though to them
A festival of unencumbered ease;

The inner spirit keeping holiday, 780
Like vernal ground to sabbath sunshine
left.

'Oft have I marked him, at some leisure
hour,

Stretched on the grass, or seated in the
shade,

Among his fellows, while an ample map
Before their eyes lay carefully outspread,

From which the gallant teacher would
discourse, 786

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK VII]

Now pointing this way, and now that.

—“Here flows,”
Thus would he say, “the Rhine, that
famous stream!

Eastward, the Danube toward this inland
sea,

A mightier river, winds from realm to
realm;

And, like a serpent, shows his glittering
back

Bespotted—with innumerable isles:
Here reigns the Russian, there the Turk;
observe

His capital city!” Thence, along a tract
Of livelier interest to his hopes and fears,
His finger moved, distinguishing the
spots

Where wide-spread conflict then most
fiercely raged;

Nor left unstigmatized those fatal fields
On which the sons of mighty Germany

Were taught a base submission.—“Here
behold

A nobler race, the Switzers, and their land,
Vales deeper far than these of ours, huge
woods,

And mountains white with everlasting
snow!”

—And, surely, he, that spake with kind-
ling brow,

Was a true patriot, hopeful as the best
Of that young peasantry, who, in our
days,

Have fought and perished for Helvetia’s
rights—

Ah, not in vain!—or those who, in old
time,

For work of happier issue, to the side
Of Tell came trooping from a thousand
huts,

When he had risen alone! No braver
Youth

Descended from Judean heights, to march
With righteous Joshua; nor appeared in
arms

When grove was felled, and altar was cast
down,

And Gideon blew the trumpet, soul-in-
flamed,

And strong in hatred of idolatry.’

The Pastor, even as if by these last
words

Raised from his seat within the chosen
shade,

Moved towards the grave;—instinctively
his steps

We followed; and my voice with joy
exclaimed:

‘Power to the Oppressors of the world
is given,

A might of which they dream not. Oh!
the curse,

To be the awakener of divinest thoughts,

Father and founder of exalted deeds;
And, to whole nations bound in servile
straits,

The liberal donor of capacities
More than heroic! this to be, nor yet

Have sense of one connatural wish, nor
yet

Deserve the least return of human thanks;
Winning no recompense but deadly hate

With pity mixed, astonishment with
scorn!’

When this involuntary strain had
ceased,

The Pastor said: ‘So Providence is served;
The forked weapon of the skies can send
illumination into deep, dark holds,

Which the mild sunbeam hath not power
to pierce.

Ye Thrones that have defied remorse, and
cast

Pity away, soon shall ye quake with fear!
For, not unconscious of the mighty debt
Which to outrageous wrong the sufferer
owes,

Europe, through all her habitable bounds,
Is thirsting for *their* overthrow, who yet
Survive, as pagan temples stood of yore,
By horror of their impious rites, pre-
served;

Are still permitted to extend their pride,
Like cedars on the top of Lebanon

Darkening the sun.

But less impatient thoughts,
And love “all hoping and expecting all,”
This hallowed grave demands, where rests
in peace

A humble champion of the better cause;
A Peasant-youth, so call him, for he
asked

No higher name; in whom our country
showed,

As in a favourite son, most beautiful.
In spite of vice, and misery, and disease,
Spread with the spreading of her wealthy
arts,

England, the ancient and the free, ap-
peared

In him to stand before my swimming
eyes,

Unconquerably virtuous and secure.
—No more of this, lest I offend his dust:
Short was his life, and a brief tale remains.

‘One day—a summer’s day of annual
pomp

And solemn chase—from morn to sultry
noon

His steps had followed, fleetest of the
fleet,

The red-deer driven along its native
heights

With cry of hound and horn; and, from
that toil

Returned with sinews weakened and relaxed,

This generous Youth, too negligent of self,
Plunged—'mid a gay and busy throng
convened

To wash the fleeces of his Father's flock—
Into the chilling flood. Convulsions dire
Seized him, that self-same night; and
through the space 871

Of twelve ensuing days his frame was
wrenched,

Till nature rested from her work in death.
To him, thus snatched away, his comrades paid

A soldier's honours. At his funeral hour
Bright was the sun, the sky a cloudless
blue— 876

A golden lustre slept upon the hills;
And if by chance a stranger, wandering
there,

From some commanding eminence had
looked

Down on this spot, well pleased would
he have seen 880

A glittering spectacle; but every face
Was pallid: seldom hath that eye been
moist

With tears, that wept not then; nor were
the few,

Who from their dwellings came not forth
to join

In this sad service, less disturbed than
we. 885

They started at the tributary peal
Of instantaneous thunder, which announced,

Through the still air, the closing of the
Grave;

And distant mountains echoed with a
sound

Of lamentation, never heard before!

The Pastor ceased.—My venerable
Friend 891

Victoriously upraised his clear bright eye;
And, when that eulogy was ended, stood
Enrapt, as if his inward sense perceived
The prolongation of some still response,
Sent by the ancient Soul of this wide
land, 896

The Spirit of its mountains and its seas,
Its cities, temples, fields, its awful power,
Its rights and virtues—by that Deity
Descending, and supporting his pure
heart 900

With patriotic confidence and joy.
And, at the last of those memorial words,
The pining Solitary turned aside;
Whether through manly instinct to conceal

Tender emotions spreading from the
heart 905

To his worn cheek; or with uneasy shame
For those cold humours of habitual spleen

That, fondly seeking in dispraise of man
Solace and self-excuse, had sometimes
urged

To self-abuse a not ineloquent tongue.
—Right toward the sacred Edifice his
steps 911

Had been directed; and we saw him now
Intent upon a monumental stone,
Whose uncouth form was grafted on the
wall,

Or rather seemed to have grown into the
side 915

Of the rude pile; as oftentimes trunks of
trees,

Where nature works in wild and craggy
spots,

Are seen incorporate with the living
rock—

To endure for aye. The Vicar, taking note
Of his employment, with a courteous
smile 920

Exclaimed—
“The sagest Antiquarian's eye

That task would foil;” then, letting fall
his voice

While he advanced, thus spake: “Tradition tells

That, in Eliza's golden days, a Knight
Came on a war-horse sumptuously
attired, 925

And fixed his home in this sequestered
vale.

'Tis left untold if here he first drew
breath,

Or as a stranger reached this deep recess,
Unknowing and unknown. A pleasing
thought

I sometimes entertain, that haply bound
To Scotland's court in service of his
Queen, 931

Or sent on mission to some northern
Chief

Of England's realm, this vale he might
have seen

With transient observation; and thence
caught

An image fair, which, brightening in his
soul 935

When joy of war and pride of chivalry
Languished beneath accumulated years,

Had power to draw him from the world,
resolved

To make that paradise his chosen home
To which his peaceful fancy oft had turned.

“Vague thoughts are these; but, if belief
may rest 941

Upon unwritten story fondly traced
From sire to son, in this obscure retreat

The Knight arrived, with spear and shield,
and borne

Upon a Charger gorgeously bedecked 945
With broided housings. And the lofty
Steed—

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His sole companion, and his faithful friend,

Whom he, in gratitude, let loose to range
In fertile pastures—was beheld with eyes
Of admiration and delightful awe, 950
By those untravelled Daiesmen. With less
pride,

Yet free from touch of envious discontent,

They saw a mansion at his bidding rise,
Like a bright star, amid the lowly band
Of their rude homesteads. Here the
Warrior dwelt; 955

And, in that mansion, children of his own,
Or kindred, gathered round him. As a
tree

That falls and disappears, the house is
gone;

And, through improvidence or want of
love

For ancient worth and honourable things,
The spear and shield are vanished, which
the Knight 961

Hung in his rustic hall. One ivied arch
Myself have seen, a gateway, last remains
Of that foundation in domestic care
Raised by his hands. And now no trace
is left 965

Of the mild-hearted Champion, save this
stone,

Faithless memorial! and his family name
Borne by yon clustering cottages, that
sprang

From out the ruins of his stately lodge:
These, and the name and title at full
length,— 970

Sir Alfred Erthing, with appropriate
words

Accompanied, still extant, in a wreath
Or posy, girding round the several fronts
Of three clear-sounding and harmonious
bells,

That in the steeple hang, his pious gift.'

'So fails, so languishes, grows dim,
and dies,' 976

The grey-haired Wanderer pensively ex-
claimed,

'All that this world is proud of. From
their spheres

The stars of human glory are cast down;
Perish the roses and the flowers of kings,¹
Princes, and emperors, and the crowns
and palms 981

Of all the mighty, withered and con-
sumed!

Nor is power given to lowliest innocence
Long to protect her own. The man him-
self

Departs; and soon is spent the line of
those 985

Who, in the bodily image, in the mind,
in heart or soul, in station or pursuit,

¹ See Note, p. 733.

Did most resemble him. Degrees and
ranks,

Fraternities and orders—heaping high
New wealth upon the burthen of the old,
And placing trust in privilege confirmed
And re-confirmed—are scoffed at with a
smile

Of greedy foretaste, from the secret stand
Of Desolation, aimed: to slow decline
These yield, and these to sudden over-
throw: 995

Their virtue, service, happiness, and state
Expire; and nature's pleasant robe of
green,

Humanity's appointed shroud, enwraps
Their monuments and their memory. The
vast Frame

Of social nature changes evermore 1000
Her organs and her members, with decay
Restless, and restless generation, powers
And functions dying and produced at
need,—

And by this law the mighty whole sub-
sists:

With an ascent and progress in the main;
Yet, oh! how disproportioned to the
hopes 1006
And expectations of self-flattering minds!

'The courteous Knight, whose bones
are here interred,

Lived in an age conspicuous as our own.
For strife and ferment in the minds of
men; 1010

Whence alteration in the forms of things,
Various and vast. A memorable age!
Which did to him assign a pensive lot—
To linger 'mid the last of those bright
clouds

That, on the steady breeze of honour,
sailed 1015

In long procession calm and beautiful.
He who had seen his own bright order
fade,

And its devotion gradually decline,
(While war, relinquishing the lance and
shield,

Her temper changed, and bowed to other
laws) 1020

Had also witnessed, in his morn of life,
That violent commotion, which o'erthrew,
In town and city and sequestered glen,
Altar, and cross, and church of solemn
roof,

And old religious house—pile after pile;
And shook their tenants out into the
fields, 1026

Like wild beasts without home! Their
hour was come;

But why no softening thought of grati-
tude,

No just remembrance, scruple, or wise
doubt?

Benevolence is mild; nor borrows help,

Save at worst need, from bold impetuous
force,

Fittest allied to anger and revenge.

But Human-kind rejoices in the might

Of mutability; and airy hopes,

Dancing around her, hinder and disturb

Those meditations of the soul that feed

The retrospective virtues. Festive songs

Break from the maddened nations at the

sight

Of sudden overthrow; and cold neglect

Is the sure consequence of slow decay.

'Even,' said the Wanderer, 'as that

courteous Knight,

Bound by his vow to labour for redress

Of all who suffer wrong, and to enact

By sword and lance the law of gentleness,

(If I may venture of myself to speak,

Trusting that not incongruously I blend
Low things with lofty) I too shall be

doomed

To outlive the kindly use and fair esteem

Of the poor calling which my youth

embraced

With no unworthy prospect. But enough;

—Thoughts crowd upon me—and 'twere

seemlier now

To stop, and yield our gracious Teacher

thanks

For the pathetic records which his voice

Hath here delivered; words of heartfelt

truth,

Tending to patience when affliction

strikes;

To hope and love; to confident repose

In God; and reverence for the dust of

Man.'

BOOK EIGHTH

THE PARSONAGE

ARGUMENT

Pastor's apology and apprehensions that he might have detained his Auditors too long, with the Pastor's invitation to his house.—Solitary disinclined to comply—rallies the Wanderer—and playfully draws a comparison between his itinerant profession and that of the Knight-errant—which leads to Wanderer's giving an account of changes in the Country from the manufacturing spirit.—Favourable effects.—The other side of the picture, and chiefly as it has affected the humbler classes.—Wanderer asserts the hollowness of all national grandeur if unsupported by moral worth.—Physical science unable to support itself.—Lamentations over an excess of manufacturing industry among the humbler Classes of Society.—Picture of a Child employed in a Cotton-mill.—Ignorance and degradation of Children among the agricultural Population reviewed.—Conversation broken off by a renewed Invitation from the Pastor.—Path leading to his House.—Its appearance described.—His Daughter.—His Wife.—His Son (a Boy) enters with his Companion.—Their happy appearance.—The Wanderer how affected by the sight of them.

THE pensive Sceptic of the lonely vale
To those acknowledgments subscribed his
own,

With a sedate compliance, which the
Priest

Failed not to notice, inly pleased, and
said:—

'If ye, by whom invited I began

These narratives of calm and humble life,

Be satisfied, 'tis well,—the end is gained;

And in return for sympathy bestowed

And patient listening, thanks accept from

me.

—Life, death, eternity! momentous
themes

Are they—and might demand a seraph's
tongue,

Were they not equal to their own support;

And therefore no incompetence of mine

Could do them wrong. The universal

forms

Of human nature, in a spot like this,

Present themselves at once to all men's

view:

Ye wished for act and circumstance, that
make

The individual known and understood;
And such as my best judgment could

select

From what the place afforded, have been
given;

Though apprehensions crossed me that

my zeal

To his might well be likened, who unlocks

A cabinet stowed with gems and pictures—

draws

His treasures forth, soliciting regard

To this, and this, as worthier than the

last,

Till the spectator, who awhile was pleased

More than the exhibitor himself, becomes

Wearied and faint, and longs to be released.

—But let us hence! my dwelling is in sight,

And there—'

At this the Solitary shrunk

With backward will; but, wanting not

address

That inward motion to disguise, he said

To his Compatriot, smiling as he spake;
—The peaceable remains of this good

Knight
Would be disturbed, I fear, with wrathful
scorn,³⁵
If consciousness could reach him where
he lies

That one, albeit of these degenerate times,
Deploping changes past, or dreading
change

Foreseen, had dared to couple, even in
thought,

The fine vocation of the sword and lance
With the gross aims and body-bending
toil⁴¹

Of a poor brotherhood who walk the
earth

Pitied, and, where they are not known,
despised.

'Yet, by the good Knight's leave, the
two estates

Are graced with some resemblance.
Errant those,⁴⁵

Exiles and wanderers—and the like are
these;

Who, with their burthen, traverse hill
and dale,

Carrying relief for nature's simple wants.
—What though no higher recompense be
sought

Than honest maintenance, by irksome
toil⁵⁰

Full oft procured, yet may they claim
respect,

Among the intelligent, for what this
course

Enables them to be and to perform.
Their tardy steps give leisure to observe,

While solitude permits the mind to feel;
Instructs, and prompts her to supply

defects⁵⁶
By the division of her inward self

For grateful converse: and to these poor
men

Nature (I but repeat your favourite boast)
Is bountiful—go wheresoe'er they may;

Kind nature's various wealth is all their
own.⁶¹

Versed in the characters of men; and
bound,

By ties of daily interest, to maintain
Conciliatory manners and smooth speech;

Such have been, and still are in their
degree,⁶⁵

Examples efficacious to refine
Rude intercourse; apt agents to expel,

By importation of unlooked-for arts,
Barbarian torpor, and blind prejudice;

Raising, through just gradation, savage
life⁷⁰

To rustic, and the rustic to urbane.
—Within their moving magazines is

lodged

Power that comes forth to quicken and
exalt

Affections seated in the mother's breast,
And in the lover's fancy; and to feed⁷⁵

The sober sympathies of long-tried friends,
—By these Itinerants, as experienced

men,
Counsel is given; contention they appease

With gentle language; in remotest wilds,
Tears wipe away, and pleasant tidings⁸⁰

bring;
Could the proud quest of chivalry do
more?'

'Happy,' rejoined the Wanderer, 'they
who gain

A panegyric from your generous tongue!
But, if to these Wayfarers once per-
tained

Aught of romantic interest, it is gone.⁸⁵
Their purer service, in this realm at least,
Is past for ever.—An inventive Age

Has wrought, if not with speed of magic,
yet

To most strange issues. I have lived to
mark

A new and unforeseen creation rise⁹⁰
From out the labours of a peaceful Land
Wielding her potent ingenuity to frame

And to produce, with appetite as keen
As that of war, which rests not night or
day,

Industrious to destroy! With fruitless⁹⁵
pains

Might one like me now visit many a tract
Which, in his youth, he trod, and trod
again,

A lone pedestrian with a scanty freight,
Wished-for, or welcome, wheresoe'er he
came—

Among the tenantry of thorp and vill;
Or straggling burgh, of ancient charter¹⁰¹
proud,

And dignified by battlements and towers
Of some stern castle, mouldering on the
brow

Of a green hill or bank of rugged stream.
The foot-path faintly marked, the horse-
track wild,¹⁰⁵

And formidable length of plashy lane,
(Prized avenues ere others had been
shaped

Or easier links connecting place with
place)
Have vanished—swallowed up by stately¹¹¹
roads

Easy and bold, that penetrate the gloom
Of Britain's farthest glens. The Earth

has lent¹¹¹
Her waters, Air her breezes;¹ and the sail
Of traffic glides with ceaseless intercourse,

Glistening along the low and woody dale;
Or, in its progress, on the lofty side¹¹⁵

¹ See Note, p. 733.

Of some bare hill, with wonder kened
from far.

'Meanwhile, at social Industry's com-
mand,

How quick, how vast an increase! From
the germ

Of some poor hamlet, rapidly produced
Here a huge town, continuous and com-
pact,

Hiding the face of earth for leagues—and
there,

Where not a habitation stood before,
Abodes of men irregularly massed

Like trees in forests,—spread through
spacious tracts,

O'er which the smoke of unremitting fires
Hangs permanent, and plentiful as
wreaths,

Of vapour glittering in the morning sun.
And, wheresoe'er the traveller turns his
steps,

He sees the barren wilderness erased.
Or disappearing; triumph that proclaims
How much the mild Directress of the
plough

Owes to alliance with these new-born
arts!

—Hence is the wide sea peopled,—hence
the shores

Of Britain are resorted to by ships
Freighted from every climate of the
world

With the world's choicest produce. Hence
that sum

Of keels that rest within her crowded
ports,

Or ride at anchor in her sounds and bays;
That animating spectacle of sails

That, through her inland regions, to and
fro

Pass with the respirations of the tide,
Perpetual, multitudinous! Finally,

Hence a dread arm of floating power, a
voice

Of thunder daunting those who would
approach

With hostile purposes the blessed Isle, 145
Truth's consecrated residence, the seat
Impregnable of Liberty and Peace.

'And yet, O happy Pastor of a flock
Faithfully watched, and, by that loving
care

And Heaven's good providence, preserved
from taint!

With you I grieve, when on the darker side
Of this great change I look; and there
behold

Such outrage done to nature as compels
The indignant power to justify herself;

Yea, to avenge her violated rights, 155
For England's bane.—When soothing
darkness spreads

O'er hill and vale,' the Wanderer thus
expressed

His recollections, 'and the punctual
stars.

While all things else are gathering to
their homes,

Advance, and in the firmament of heaven
Glitter—but undisturbing, undisturbed;

As if their silent company were charged
With peaceful admonitions for the heart

Of all-beholding Man, earth's thoughtful
lord;

Then, in full many a region, once like
this

The assured domain of calm simplicity
And pensive quiet, an unnatural light

Prepared for never-resting Labour's eyes
Breaks from a many-windowed fabric
huge;

And at the appointed hour a bell is heard,
Of harsher import than the curfew-knoll

That spake the Norman Conqueror's stern
behest—

A local summons to unceasing toil!
Disgorged are now the ministers of day;

And, as they issue from the illumined
pile,

A fresh band meets them, at the crowded
door—

And in the courts—and where the rum-
bling stream,

That turns the multitude of dizzy wheels,
Glares, like a troubled spirit, in its bed

Among the rocks below. Men, maidens,
youths,

Mother and little children, boys and girls,
Enter, and each the wonted task resumes

Within this temple, where is offered up
To Gain, the master-idol of the realm,

Perpetual sacrifice. Even thus of old 185
Our ancestors, within the still domain
Of vast cathedral or conventual church,

Their vigils kept; where tapers day and
night

On the dim altar burned continually,
In token that the House was evermore

Watching to God. Religious men were
they;

Nor would their reason, tutored to aspire
Above this transitory world, allow

That there should pass a moment of the
year,

When in their land the Almighty's service
ceased.

'Triumph who will in these profaner
rites

Which we, a generation self-extolled,
As zealously perform! I cannot share

His proud complacency:—yet do I exult,
Casting reserve away, exult to see 200

An intellectual mastery exercised
O'er the blind elements; a purpose given,
A perseverance fed; almost a soul

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK VIII]

Imparted—to brute matter. I rejoice,
Measuring the force of those gigantic
powers 205

That, by the thinking mind, have been
compelled

To serve the will of feeble-bodied Man.
For with the sense of admiration blends
The animating hope that time may come
When, strengthened, yet not dazzled, by
the might 210

Of this dominion over nature gained,
Men of all lands shall exercise the same
In due proportion to their country's need;
Learning, though late, that all true glory
rests, 214

All praise, all safety, and all happiness,
Upon the moral law. Egyptian Thebes,
Tyre, by the margin of the sounding
waves,

Palmyra, central in the desert, fell;
And the Arts died by which they had
been raised. 219

—Call Archimedes from his buried tomb
Upon the grave of vanished Syracuse,
And feelingly the Sage shall make report
How insecure, how baseless in itself,
Is the Philosophy whose sway depends
On mere material instruments;—how
weak 225

Those arts, and high inventions, if un-
propped

By virtue.—He, sighing with pensive
grief,

Amid his calm abstractions, would admit
That not the slender privilege is theirs
To save themselves from blank forgetful-
ness! 230

When from the Wanderer's lips these
words had fallen,
I said, 'And, did in truth those vaunted
Arts

Possess such privilege, how could we
escape

Sadness and keen regret, we who revere,
And would preserve as things above all
price, 235

The old domestic morals of the land,
Her simple manners, and the stable worth
That dignified and cheered a low estate?
Oh! where is now the character of peace,
Sobriety, and order, and chaste love, 240
And honest dealing, and untainted speech,
And pure good-will, and hospitable cheer;
That made the very thought of country-
life

A thought of refuge, for a mind detained
Reluctantly amid the bustling crowd? 245
Where now the beauty of the sabbath kept
With conscientious reverence, as a day
By the almighty Lawgiver pronounced
Holy and blest? and where the winning
grace

Of all the lighter ornaments attached

To time and season, as the year rolled
round?' 251

'Fled!' was the Wanderer's passion-
ate response,

'Fled utterly! or only to be traced
In a few fortunate retreats like this;
Which I beheld with trembling, when I
think 255

What lamentable change, a year—a
month—

May bring; that brook converting as it
runs

Into an instrument of deadly bane
For those, who, yet untempted to forsake
The simple occupations of their sires, 260
Drink the pure water of its innocent
stream

With lip almost as pure.—Domestic bliss
(Or call it comfort, by a humbler name,)
How art thou blighted for the poor Man's
heart!

Lo! in such neighbourhood, from morn
to eve, 265

The habitations empty! or perchance
The Mother left alone,—no helping hand
To rock the cradle of her peevish babe;
No daughters round her, busy at the
wheel, 269

Or in dispatch of each day's little growth
Of household occupation; no nice arts
Of needle-work; no bustle at the fire,
Where once the dinner was prepared with
pride;

Nothing to speed the day, or cheer the
mind;

Nothing to praise, to teach, or to com-
mand! 275

'The Father, if perchance he still retain
His old employments, goes to field or
wood,

No longer led or followed by the Sons;
Idlers perchance they were,—but in his
sight;

Breathing fresh air, and treading the green
earth; 280

Till their short holiday of childhood
ceased,

Ne'er to return! That birthright now is
lost.

Economists will tell you that the State
Thrives by the forfeiture—unfeeling
thought,

And false as monstrous! Can the mother
thrive 285

By the destruction of her innocent sons
In whom a premature necessity
Blocks out the forms of nature, precon-
sumes

The reason, famishes the heart, shuts up
The infant Being in itself, and makes
Its very spring a season of decay! 291
The lot is wretched, the condition sad,

Whether a pining discontent survive,
And thirst for change; or habit hath subdued

The soul deprest, dejected—even to love
Of her close tasks, and long captivity.

'Oh, banish far such wisdom as condemnns

A native Briton to these inward chains,
Fixed in his soul, so early and so deep;
Without his own consent, or knowledge,
fixed!

He is a slave to whom release comes
not,

And cannot come. The boy, where'er he
turns,

Is still a prisoner; when the wind is up
Among the clouds, and roars through the
ancient woods;

Or when the sun is shining in the east,
Quiet and calm. Behold him—in the
school

Of his attainments? no; but with the air
Fanning his temples under heaven's blue
arch.

His raiment, whitened o'er with cotton-
flakes

Or locks of wool, announces whence he
comes,

Creeping his gait and cowering, his lip
pale,

His respiration quick and audible;
And scarcely could you fancy that a
gleam

Could break from out those languid eyes,
or a blush

Mantle upon his cheek. Is this the form,
Is that the countenance, and such the
port,

Of no mean Being? One who should be
clothed

With dignity befitting his proud hope;
Who, in his very childhood, should ap-
pear

Sublime from present purity and joy! 320
The limbs increase; but liberty of mind

Is gone for ever; and this organic frame,
So joyful in its motions, is become

Dull, to the joy of her own motions dead;
And even the touch, so exquisitely poured
Through the whole body, with a languid
will

Performs its functions; rarely competent
To impress a vivid feeling on the mind

Of what there is delightful in the breeze,
The gentle visitations of the sun,

Or lapse of liquid element—by hand, 330
Or foot, or lip, in summer's warmth—per-
ceived.

—Can hope look forward to a manhood
raised

On such foundations?'
'Hope is none for him!'

The pale Recluse indignantly exclaimed,

'And tens of thousands suffer wrong as
deep.

Yet be it asked, in justice to our age, 336
If there were not, before those arts ap-
peared,

These structures rose, commingling old
and young,

And unripe sex with sex, for mutual
taint;

If there were not, *then*, in our far-famed
Isle,

Multitudes, who from infancy had
breathed

Air unimprisoned, and had lived at large;
Yet walked beneath the sun, in human
shape,

As abject, as degraded? At this day, 345
Who shall enumerate the crazy huts
And tottering hovels, whence do issue
forth

A ragged Offspring, with their upright
hair

Crowned like the image of fantastic Fear;
Or wearing, (shall we say?) in that white
growth

An ill-adjusted turban, for defence 350
Or fierceness, wreathed around their sun-
burnt brows,

By savage Nature? Shrivelled are their
lips;

Naked, and coloured like the soil, the
feet

On which they stand; as if thereby they
drew

Some nourishment, as trees do by their
roots,

From earth, the common mother of us all.
Figure and mien, complexion and attire,

Are leagued to strike dismay; but out-
stretched hand

And whining voice denote them suppli-
cants

For the least boon that pity can bestow.
Such on the breast of darksome heaths
are found;

And with their parents occupy the skirts
Of furze-clad commons; such are born
and reared

At the mine's mouth under impending
rocks;

Or dwell in chambers of some natural
cave;

Or where their ancestors erected huts,
For the convenience of unlawful gain,

In forest purlieus; and the like are bred,
All England through, where nooks and
slips of ground

Purloined, in times less jealous than our
own,

From the green margin of the public way,
A residence afford them, 'mid the bloom
And gaiety of cultivated fields.

Such (we will hope the lowest in the scale) 374
Do I remember oftentimes to have seen

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK VIII]

'Mid Buxton's dreary heights. In earnest
watch,

Till the swift vehicle approach, they stand;
Then, following closely with the cloud of
dust, 379

An uncouth feat exhibit, and are gone
Heels over head, like tumblers on a stage.

—Up from the ground they snatch the
copper coin,

And, on the freight of merry passengers
Fixing a steady eye, maintain their speed;

And spin—and pant—and overhead
again, 385

Wild pursuivants! until their breath is
lost,

Or bounty tires—and every face, that
smiled

Encouragement, hath ceased to look that
way.

—But, like the vagrants of the gipsy tribe,
These, bred to little pleasure in them-
selves, 390

Are profitless to others.

Turn we then
To Britons born and bred within the pale

Of civil polity, and early trained
To earn, by wholesome labour in the field,

The bread they eat. A sample should I
give 395

Of what this stock hath long produced to
enrich

The tender age of life, ye would exclaim,
"Is this the whistling plough-boy whose
shrill notes

Impart new gladness to the morning air!"
Forgive me if I venture to suspect 400

That many, sweet to hear of in soft verse,
Are of no finer frame. Stiff are his joints;

Beneath a cumbrous frock, that to the
knees

Invests the thriving churl, his legs appear,
Fellows to those that lustily upheld 405

The wooden stools for everlasting use,
Whereon our fathers sate. And mark
his brow!

Under whose shaggy canopy are set
Two eyes—not dim, but of a healthy
stare—

Wide, sluggish, blank, and ignorant, and
strange— 410

Proclaiming boldly that they never drew
A look or motion of intelligence

From infant-conning of the Christ-cross-
row,

Or puzzling through a primer, line by line,
Till perfect mastery crown the pains at
last. 415

—What kindly warmth from touch of
fostering hand,

What penetrating power of sun or breeze,
Shall e'er dissolve the crust wherein his
soul

Sleeps, like a caterpillar sheathed in ice?
This torpor is no pitiable work 420

Of modern ingenuity; no town
Nor crowded city can be taxed with aught

Of sottish vice or desperate breach of law,
To which (and who can tell where or how
soon?)

He may be roused. This Boy the fields
produce: 425

His spade and hoe, mattock and glitter-
ing scythe,

The carter's whip that on his shoulder
rests

In air high-towering with a boorish pomp,
The sceptre of his sway; his country's
name,

Her equal rights, her churches and her
schools— 430

What have they done for him? And, let
me ask,

For tens of thousands uninformed as he?
In brief, what liberty of mind is here?

This ardent sally pleased the mild good
Man,

To whom the appeal couched in its closing
words 435

Was pointedly addressed; and to the
thoughts

That, in assent or opposition, rose
Within his mind, he seemed prepared to
give

Prompt utterance; but the Vicar inter-
posed

With invitation urgently renewed. 440
—We followed, taking as he led, a path

Along a hedge of hollies dark and tall,
Whose flexible boughs low bending with a
weight

Of leafy spray, concealed the stems and
roots

That gave them nourishment. When
frosty winds 445

Howl from the north, what kindly warmth,
methought,

Is here—how grateful this impervious
screen!

—Not shaped by simple wearing of the
foot

On rural business passing to and fro
Was the commodious walk: a careful
hand 450

Had marked the line, and strewn its sur-
face o'er

With pure cerulean gravel, from the
heights

Fetched by a neighbouring brook.—
Across the vale

The stately fence accompanied our steps;
And thus the pathway, by perennial
green 455

Guarded and graced, seemed fashioned
to unite,

As by a beautiful yet solemn chain,
The Pastor's mansion with the house of
prayer.

Like image of solemnity, conjoined
With feminine allurements soft and fair,
The mansion's self displayed;—a reverend
pile

With bold projections and recesses deep;
Shadowy, yet gay and lightsome as it
stood

Fronting the noontide sun. We paused
to admire

The pillared porch, elaborately embossed;
The low wide windows with their mul-
lions old;

The cornice, richly fretted, of grey stone;
And that smooth slope from which the
dwelling rose,

By beds and banks Arcadian of gay
flowers

And flowering shrubs, protected and
adorned;

Profusion bright! and every flower as-
suming

A more than natural vividness of hue
From unaffected contrast with the gloom
Of sober cypress, and the darker foil
Of yew, in which survived some traces,
here

Not unbefitting, of grotesque device
And uncouth fancy. From behind the
roof

Rose the slim ash and massy sycamore,
Blending their diverse foliage with the
green

Of ivy, flourishing and thick, that clasped
The huge round chimneys, harbour of
delight

For wren and redbreast,—where they sit
and sing

Their slender ditties when the trees are
bare.

Nor must I leave untouched (the picture
else

Were incomplete) a relique of old times
Happily spared, a little Gothic niche
Of nicest workmanship; that once had
held

The sculptured image of some patron-
saint,

Or of the blessed Virgin, looking down
On all who entered those religious doors.

But lo! where from the rocky garden-
mount
Crowned by its antique summer-house—
descends,

Light as the silver fawn, a radiant Girl;
For she hath recognised her honoured
friend,

The Wanderer ever welcome! A prompt
kiss

The gladsome child bestows at his re-
quest;

And, up the flowery lawn as we advance,
Hangs on the old Man with a happy look,
And with a restless hand of love.

—We enter—by the Lady of the place
Cordially greeted. Graceful was her port:
A lofty stature undepressed by time,

Whose visitation had not wholly spared
The finer lineaments of form and face;
To that complexion brought which pru-
dence trusts in

And wisdom loves.—But when a stately
ship

Sails in smooth weather by the placid
coast

On homeward voyage,—what if wind and
wave,

And hardship undergone in various
climes,

Have caused her to abate the virgin
pride,

And that full trim of inexperienced hope
With which she left her haven—not for
this,

Should the sun strike her, and the im-
partial breeze

Play on her streamers, fails she to assume
Brightness and touching beauty of her
own,

That charm all eyes. So bright, so fair,
appeared

This goodly Matron, shining in the beams
Of unexpected pleasure.—Soon the board
Was spread, and we partook a plain re-
past.

Here, resting in cool shelter, we beguiled
The mid-day hours with desultory talk;

From trivial themes to general argument
Passing, as accident or fancy led,
Or courtesy prescribed. While question
rose

And answer flowed, the fetters of reserve
Dropping from every mind, the Solitary
Resumed the manners of his happier
days;

And in the various conversation bore
A willing, nay, at times, a forward part;

Yet with the grace of one who in the
world

Had learned the art of pleasing, and had
now

Occasion given him to display his skill,
Upon the steadfast 'vantage-ground of
truth.

He gazed, with admiration unexpressed,
Upon the landscape of the sun-bright
vale,

Seen, from the shady room in which we
sate,

In softened perspective; and more than
once

Praised the consummate harmony serene
Of gravity and elegance, diffused
Around the mansion and its whole
domain;

Not, doubtless, without help of female
taste

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK VIII

And female care.—‘A blessed lot is
yours!’

The words escaped his lip, with a tender
sigh

Breathed over them: but suddenly the
door

Flew open, and a pair of lusty Boys 545
Appeared, confusion checking their de-
light.

—Not brothers they in feature or attire,
But fond companions, so I guessed, in
field,

And by the river’s margin—whence they
come, 549

Keen anglers with unusual spoil elated,
One bears a willow-pannier on his back,
The boy of plainer garb, whose blush
survives

More deeply tinged. Twin might the
other be

To that fair girl who from the garden-
mount

Bounded;—triumphant entry this for
him! 555

Between his hands he holds a smooth
blue stone,

On whose capacious surface see out-
spread

Large store of gleaming crimson-spotted
trouts;

Ranged side by side, and lessening by
degrees

Up to the dwarf that tops the pinnacle.
Upon the board he lays the sky-blue
stone 561

With its rich freight; their number he
proclaims;

Tells from what pool the noblest had
been dragged;

And where the very monarch of the brook,
After long struggle, had escaped at last—

Stealing alternately at them and us 566
(As doth his comrade too) a look of pride:

And, verily, the silent creatures made
A splendid sight, together thus exposed;

Dead—but not sullied or deformed by
death, 570

That seemed to pity what he could not
spare.

But O, the animation in the mien
Of those two boys! yea in the very words
With which the young narrator was in-
spired,

When, as our questions led, he told at
large 575

Of that day’s prowess! Him might I com-
pare,

His looks, tones, gestures, eager elo-
quence,

To a bold brook that splits for better
speed,

And at the self-same moment, works its
way

Through many channels, ever and anon
Parted and re-united: his compeer 581

To the still lake, whose stillness is to sight
As beautiful—as grateful to the mind.

—But to what object shall the lovely Girl
Be likened? She whose countenance and
air 585

Unite the graceful qualities of both,
Even as she shares the pride and joy of
both.

My grey-haired Friend was moved; his
vivid eye

Glistened with tenderness; his mind, I
knew,

Was full; and had, I doubted not, re-
turned, 590

Upon this impulse, to the theme—ere-
while

Abruptly broken off. The ruddy boys
Withdrew, on summons to their well-
earned meal;

And He—to whom all tongues resigned
their rights

With willingness, to whom the general
ear 595

Listened with readier patience than to
strain

Of music, lute or harp, a long delight
That ceased not when his voice had
ceased—as One

Who from truth’s central point serenely
views 599

The compass of his argument—began
Mildly, and with a clear and steady tone.

BOOK NINTH

DISCOURSE OF THE WANDERER, AND AN EVENING VISIT TO THE LAKE

ARGUMENT

Wanderer asserts that an active principle pervades the Universe, its noblest seat the human soul.—How lively this principle is in Childhood.—Hence the delight in old Age of looking back upon Childhood.—The dignity, powers, and privileges of Age asserted.—These not to be looked for generally but under a just government.—Right of a human Creature to be exempt from being considered as a mere Instrument.—The condition of multitudes deplored.—Former conversation recurred to, and the Wanderer's opinions set in a clearer light.—Truth placed within reach of the humblest.—Equality.—Happy state of the two Boys again adverted to.—Earnest wish expressed for a System of National Education established universally by Government.—Glorious effects of this foretold.—Walk to the Lake.—Grand spectacle from the side of a hill.—Address of Priest to the Supreme Being—in the course of which he contrasts with ancient Barbarism the present appearance of the scene before him.—The change ascribed to Christianity.—Apostrophe to his flock, living and dead.—Gratitude to the Almighty.—Return over the Lake.—Parting with the Solitary.—Under what circumstances.

'To every Form of being is assigned,
Thus calmly spake the venerable Sage,
'An active Principle:—howe'er removed
From sense and observation, it subsists
In all things, in all natures; in the stars 5
Of azure heaven, the unenduring clouds,
In flower and tree, in every pebbly stone
That paves the brooks, the stationary
rocks,

The moving waters, and the invisible air.
Whate'er exists hath properties that
spread 10

Beyond itself, communicating good,
A simple blessing, or with evil mixed;
Spirit that knows no insulated spot,
No chasm, no solitude; from link to link
It circulates, the Soul of all the worlds. 15
This is the freedom of the universe;
Unfolded still the more, more visible,
The more we know; and yet is revered
least,

And least respected in the human Mind,
Its most apparent home. The food of
hope 20

Is meditated action; robbed of this
Her sole support, she languishes and
dies.

We perish also; for we live by hope
And by desire; we see by the glad light
And breathe the sweet air of futurity; 25
And so we live, or else we have no life.
To-morrow—nay perchance this very
hour

(For every moment hath its own to-morrow!)

Those blooming Boys, whose hearts are
almost sick

With present triumph, will be sure to
find 30

A field before them freshened with the
dew

Of other expectations;—in which course
Their happy year spins round. The youth
obeys

A like glad impulse; and so moves the man
'Mid all his apprehensions, cares, and
fears,— 35

Or so he ought to move. Ah! why in
age

Do we revert so fondly to the walks
Of childhood—but that there the Soul
discerns

The dear memorial footsteps unimpaired
Of her own native vigour; thence can
hear 40

Reverberations; and a choral song,
Commencing with the incense that ascends,

Undaunted, toward the imperishable
heavens,

From her own lonely altar?

Do not think
That good and wise ever will be al-
lowed, 45

Though strength decay, to breathe in such
estate

As shall divide them wholly from the stir
Of hopeful nature. Rightly it is said

That Man descends into the VALE of
years;

Yet have I thought that we might also
speak, 50

And not presumptuously, I trust, of Age,
As of a final EMINENCE; though bare

In aspect and forbidding, yet a point
On which 'tis not impossible to sit

In awful sovereignty; a place of power, 55
A throne, that may be likened unto his,
Who, in some placid day of summer,

looks
Down from a mountain-top,—say one of
those

High peaks, that bound the vale where
now we are. 59

Faint, and diminished to the gazing eye,
Forest and field, and hill and dale appear,

With all the shapes over their surface
spread:

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK IX

But, while the gross and visible frame of things

Relinquishes its hold upon the sense,
Yea almost on the Mind herself, and seems

All unsubstantialized,—how loud the voice

Of waters, with invigorated peal
From the full river in the vale below,
Ascending! For on that superior height
Who sits, is disencumbered from the press
Of near obstructions, and is privileged
To breathe in solitude, above the host
Of ever-humming insects, 'mid thin air
That suits not them. The murmur of the leaves

Many and idle, visits not his ear: 75
This he is freed from, and from thousand notes

(Not less unceasing, not less vain than these,)

By which the finer passages of sense
Are occupied; and the Soul, that would incline

To listen, is prevented or deterred. 80

'And may it not be hoped, that, placed by age

In like removal, tranquil though severe,
We are not so removed for utter loss;
But for some favour, suited to our need?
What more than that the severing should confer 85

Fresh power to commune with the invisible world,

And hear the mighty stream of tendency
Uttering, for elevation of our thought,
A clear sonorous voice, inaudible 89
To the vast multitude; whose doom it is
To run the giddy round of vain delight,
Or fret and labour on the Plain below.

'But, if to such sublime ascent the hopes

Of Man may rise, as to a welcome close
And termination of his mortal course; 95
Them only can such hope inspire whose minds

Have not been starved by absolute neglect;
Nor bodies crushed by unremitting toil;
To whom kind Nature, therefore, may afford

Proof of the sacred love she bears for all;
Whose birthright Reason, therefore, may ensure. 101

For me, consulting what I feel within
In times when most existence with herself

Is satisfied, I cannot but believe,
That, far as kindly Nature hath free scope 105

And Reason's sway predominates; even so far,

Country, society, and time itself,

That saps the individual's bodily frame,
And lays the generations low in dust,
Do, by the almighty Ruler's grace, partake 110

Of one maternal spirit, bringing forth
And cherishing with ever-constant love,
That tires not, nor betrays. Our life is turned

Out of her course, wherever man is made
An offering, or a sacrifice, a tool 115
Or implement, a passive thing employed
As a brute mean, without acknowledgment

Of common right or interest in the end;
Used or abused, selfishness may prompt.
Say, what can follow for a rational soul
Perverted thus, but weakness in all good,
And strength in evil? Hence an after-call

For chastisement, and custody, and bonds,

And ofttimes Death, avenger of the past,
And the sole guardian in whose hands we dare 125

Entrust the future.—Not for these sad issues

Was Man created; but to obey the law
Of life, and hope, and action. And 'tis known

That when we stand upon our native soil,
Unelbowed by such objects as oppress
Our active powers, those powers themselves become 131

Strong to subvert our noxious qualities:
They sweep distemper from the busy day,
And make the chalice of the big round year

Run o'er with gladness; whence the Being moves 135

In beauty through the world; and all who see

Bless him, rejoicing in his neighbourhood.

'Then,' said the Solitary, 'by what force

Of language shall a feeling heart express
Her sorrow for that multitude in whom
We look for health from seeds that have been sown 141

In sickness, and for increase in a power
That works but by extinction? On themselves

They cannot lean, nor turn to their own hearts

To know what they must do; their wisdom is 145

To look into the eyes of others, thence
To be instructed, what they must avoid:
Or rather, let us say, how least observed,
How with most quiet and most silent death,

With the least taint and injury to the air 150

The oppressor breathes, their human form
divine,
And their immortal soul, may waste
away.'

The Sage rejoined, 'I thank you—you
have spared
My voice the utterance of a keen regret,
A wide compassion which with you I
share. 155
When, heretofore, I placed before your
sight

A Little-one, subjected to the arts
Of modern ingenuity, and made
The senseless member of a vast machine,
Serving as doth a spindle or a wheel; 160
Think not, that, pitying him, I could
forget

The rustic Boy, who walks the fields,
untaught;

The slave of ignorance, and oft of want,
And miserable hunger. Much, too much,
Of this unhappy lot, in early youth 165
We both have witnessed, lot which I my-
self

Shared, though in mild and merciful
degree:

Yet was the mind to hinderances exposed,
Through which I struggled, not without
distress

And sometimes injury, like a lamb en-
thrall'd 170

'Mid thorns and brambles; or a bird that
breaks

Through a strong net, and mounts upon
the wind,

Though with her plumes impaired. If
they, whose souls

Should open while they range the richer
fields 174

Of merry England, are obstructed less
By indigence, their ignorance is not less,
Nor less to be deplored. For who can doubt
That tens of thousands at this day exist
Such as the boy you painted, lineal heirs
Of those who once were vassals of her
soil, 180

Following its fortunes like the beasts or
trees

Which it sustained. But no one takes
delight

In this oppression; none are proud of it;
It bears no sounding name, nor ever bore;
A standing grievance, an indigenous vice
Of every country under heaven. My
thoughts 186

Were turned to evils that are new and
chosen,

A bondage lurking under shape of good,—
Arts, in themselves beneficent and kind,
But all too fondly followed and too far;—
To victims, which the merciful can see

Nor think that they are victims—turned
to wrongs, 192

By women, who have children of their
own,
Beheld without compassion, yea, with
praise!

I spake of mischief by the wise diffused
With gladness, thinking that the more it
spreads 196

The healthier, the securer, we become;
Delusion which a moment may destroy!
Lastly I mourned for those whom I had
seen

Corrupted and cast down, on favoured
ground, 200
Where circumstance and nature had com-
bined

To shelter innocence, and cherish love;
Who, but for this intrusion, would have
lived,

Possessed of health, and strength, and
peace of mind;

Thus would have lived, or never have
been born. 205

'Alas! what differs more than man
from man!

And whence that difference? Whence but
from himself?

For see the universal Race endowed
With the same upright form! The sun is
fixed, 209

And the infinite magnificence of heaven
Fixed, within reach of every human
eye;

The sleepless ocean murmurs for all ears;
The vernal field infuses fresh delight
Into all hearts. Throughout the world of
sense,

Even as an object is sublime or fair, 215
That object is laid open to the view

Without reserve or veil; and as a power
Is salutary, or an influence sweet,
Are each and all enabled to perceive
That power, that influence, by impartial
law. 220

Gifts nobler are vouchsafed alike to all;
Reason, and, with that reason, smiles and
tears;

Imagination, freedom in the will;
Conscience to guide and check; and death
to be

Foretasted, immortality conceived 225
By all,—a blissful immortality,

To them whose holiness on earth shall
make

The Spirit capable of heaven, assured.
Strange, then, nor less than monstrous,
might be deemed

The failure, if the Almighty, to this
point 230

Liberal and undistinguishing, should hide
The excellence of moral qualities

From common understanding; leaving
truth

And virtue, difficult, abstruse, and dark;

Hard to be won, and only by a few; 235
Strange, should He deal herein with nice
respects,

And frustrate all the rest! Believe it not:
The primal duties shine aloft—like stars;
The charities that soothe, and heal, and
bless,

Are scattered at the feet of Man—like
flowers. 240

The generous inclination, the just rule,
Kind wishes, and good actions, and pure
thoughts—

No mystery is here! Here is no boon
For high—yet not for low; for proudly
graced—

Yet not for meek of heart. The smoke
ascends 245

To heaven as lightly from the cottage-
hearth

As from the haughtiest palace. He, whose
soul

Ponders this true equality, may walk
The fields of earth with gratitude and
hope;

Yet, in that meditation, will he find 250
Motive to sadder grief, as we have found;
Lamenting ancient virtues overthrown,

And for the injustice grieving, that hath
made

So wide a difference between man and
man.

'Then let us rather fix our gladdened
thoughts 255

Upon the brighter scene. How blest that
pair

Of blooming Boys (whom we beheld even
now)

Blest in their several and their common
lot!

A few short hours of each returning day
The thriving prisoners of their village-
school: 260

And thence let loose, to seek their
pleasant homes

Or range the grassy lawn in vacancy;
To breathe and to be happy, run and
shout

Idle,—but no delay, no harm, no loss;
For every genial power of heaven and
earth, 265

Through all the seasons of the changeful
year,

Obssequiously doth take upon herself
To labour for them; bringing each in turn
The tribute of enjoyment, knowledge,
health,

Beauty, or strength! Such privilege is
theirs, 270

Granted alike in the outset of their course
To both; and, if that partnership must
cease,

I grieve not,' to the Pastor here he
turned,

'Much as I glory in that child of yours,
Repine not for his cottage-comrade,
whom 275

Belike no higher destiny awaits
Than the old hereditary wish fulfilled;
The wish for liberty to live—content
With what Heaven grants, and die—in
peace of mind,

Within the bosom of his native vale. 280

At least, whatever fate the noon of life
Reserves for either, sure it is that both
Have been permitted to enjoy the dawn;
Whether regarded as a jocund time,
That in itself may terminate, or lead 285

In course of nature to a sober eve.
Both have been fairly dealt with; looking
back

They will allow that justice has in them
Been shown, alike to body and to mind.'

He paused, as if revolving in his soul
Some weighty matter; then, with fervent
voice 291

And an impassioned majesty, exclaimed—

'O for the coming of that glorious time
When, prizing knowledge as her noblest
wealth 294

And best protection, this imperial Realm,
While she exacts allegiance, shall admit

An obligation, on her part, to *teach*
Them who are born to serve her and obey;

Binding herself by statute to secure¹
For all the children whom her soil

maintains 300

The rudiments of letters, and inform
The mind with moral and religious truth,

Both understood and practised,—so that
none,

However destitute, be left to droop
By timely culture unsustained; or run 305

Into a wild disorder; or be forced
To drudge through a weary life without
the help

Of intellectual implements and tools;
A savage horde among the civilised,

A servile band among the lordly free! 310

This sacred right, the lisping babe pro-
claims

To be inherent in him, by Heaven's will,
For the protection of his innocence;

And the rude boy—who, having overpast
The sinless age, by conscience is enrolled,

Yet mutinously knits his angry brow,
And lifts his wilful hand on mischief bent,

Or turns the godlike faculty of speech
To impious use—by process indirect
Declares his due, while he makes known

his need. 320

—This sacred right is fruitlessly an-
nounced,

This universal plea in vain addressed,
To eyes and ears of parents who them-
selves

See Note, p. 733.

Did, in the time of their necessity,
 Urge it in vain; and, therefore, like a
 prayer ³²⁵
 That from the humblest floor ascends to
 heaven,
 It mounts to reach the State's parental
 ear;
 Who, if indeed she own a mother's heart,
 And be not most unfeelingly devoid
 Of gratitude to Providence, will grant ³³⁰
 The unquestionable good—which, Eng-
 land, safe
 From interference of external force,
 May grant at leisure; without risk in-
 curred
 That what in wisdom for herself she doth,
 Others shall e'er be able to undo. ³³⁵

'Look! and behold, from Calpe's sun-
 burnt cliffs

To the flat margin of the Baltic sea,
 Long-reverenced titles cast away as weeds;
 Laws overturned; and territory split,
 Like fields of ice rent by the polar wind,
 And forced to join in less obnoxious
 shapes ³⁴¹
 Which, ere they gain consistence, by a gust
 Of the same breath are shattered and
 destroyed.

Meantime the sovereignty of these fair
 Isles

Remains entire and indivisible: ³⁴⁵
 And, if that ignorance were removed,
 which breeds

Within the compass of their several shores
 Dark discontent, or loud commotion, each
 Might still preserve the beautiful repose
 Of heavenly bodies shining in their
 spheres. ³⁵⁰

—The discipline of slavery is unknown
 Among us,—hence the more do we re-
 quire

The discipline of virtue; order else
 Cannot subsist, nor confidence, nor peace.
 Thus, duties rising out of good posset ³⁵⁵
 And prudent caution needful to avert
 Impending evil, equally require
 That the whole people should be taught
 and trained.

So shall licentiousness and black resolve
 Be rooted out, and virtuous habits take
 Their place; and genuine piety descend,
 Like an inheritance, from age to age. ³⁶²

'With such foundations laid, avault
 the fear

Of numbers crowded on their native soil,
 To the prevention of all healthful growth
 Through mutual injury! Rather in the
 law ³⁶⁶

Of increase and the mandate from above
 Rejoice!—and ye have special cause for
 joy.

—For, as the element of air affords

An easy passage to the industrious bees
 Fraught with their burthens; and a way
 as smooth ³⁷¹
 For those ordained to take their sounding
 flight

From the thronged hive, and settle where
 they list

In fresh abodes—their labour to renew;
 So the wide waters, open to the power,
 The will, the instincts, and appointed
 needs ³⁷⁶

Of Britain, do invite her to cast off
 Her swarms, and in succession send them
 forth;

Bound to establish new communities
 On every shore whose aspect favours
 hope ³⁸⁰

Or bold adventure; promising to skill
 And perseverance their deserved reward.

'Yes,' he continued, kindling as he
 spake,

'Change wide, and deep, and silently
 performed,

This Land shall witness; and as days roll
 on, ³⁸⁵

Earth's universal frame shall feel the
 effect;

Even till the smallest habitable rock,
 Beaten by lonely billows, hear the songs
 Of humanised society; and bloom

With civil arts, that shall breathe forth
 their fragrance, ³⁹⁰

A grateful tribute to all-ruling Heaven.
 From culture, unexclusively bestowed

On Albion's noble Race in freedom born,
 Expect these mighty issues: from the
 pains ³⁹⁴

And faithful care of unambitious schools
 Instructing simple childhood's ready ear:

Thence look for these magnificent results!
 —Vast the circumference of hope—and ye

Are at its centre, British Lawgivers;
 Ah! sleep not there in shame! Shall Wis-
 dom's voice ⁴⁰⁰

From out the bosom of these troubled
 times

Repeat the dictates of her calmer mind,
 And shall the venerable halls ye fill

Refuse to echo the sublime decree?
 Trust not to partial care a general good;

Transfer not to futurity a work ⁴⁰⁶
 Of urgent need.—Your Country must
 complete

Her glorious destiny. Begin even now,
 Now, when oppression, like the Egyptian

plague

Of darkness, stretched o'er guilty Europe,
 makes ⁴¹⁰

The brightness more conspicuous that in-
 vests

The happy Island where ye think and act;
 Now, when destruction is a prime pur-
 suit,

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK IX

Show to the wretched nations for what
end
The powers of civil polity were given.'⁴¹⁴

Abruptly here, but with a graceful air,
The Sage broke off. No sooner had he
ceased

Than, looking forth, the gentle Lady said,
'Behold the shades of afternoon have
fallen

Upon this flowery slope; and see—be-
yond—⁴²⁰

The silvery lake is streaked with placid
blue;

As if preparing for the peace of evening.
How temptingly the landscape shines!

The air
Breathes invitation; easy is the walk
To the lake's margin, where a boat lies
moored⁴²⁵

Under a sheltering tree.'—Upon this hint
We rose together: all were pleased; but
most

The beauteous girl, whose cheek was
flushed with joy.

Light as a sunbeam glides along the hills
She vanished—eager to impart the scheme
To her loved brother and his shy com-
peer.⁴³¹

—Now was there bustle in the Vicar's
house

And earnest preparation.—Forth we went,
And down the vale along the streamlet's
edge

Pursued our way, a broken company, 435
Mute or conversing, single or in pairs.

Thus having reached a bridge, that over-
arched

The hasty rivulet where it lay becalmed
In a deep pool, by happy chance we saw
A twofold image; on a grassy bank⁴⁴⁰
A snow-white ram, and in the crystal
flood

Another and the same! Most beautiful,
On the green turf, with his imperial front
Shaggy and bold, and wreathed horns
superb,

The breathing creature stood; as beauti-
ful,⁴⁴⁵

Beneath him, showed his shadowy coun-
terpart.

Each had his glowing mountains, each
his sky,

And each seemed centre of his own fair
world:

Antipodes unconscious of each other,
Yet, in partition, with their several
spheres,⁴⁵⁰

Blended in perfect stillness, to our sight!

'Ah! what a pity were it to disperse,
Or to disturb, so fair a spectacle,
And yet a breath can do it!'

These few words

The Lady whispered, while we stood and
gazed⁴⁵⁵

Gathered together, all in still delight,
Not without awe. Thence passing on, she
said

In like low voice to my particular ear,
'I love to hear that eloquent old Man
Pour forth his meditations, and descant
On human life from infancy to age.'⁴⁶¹

How pure his spirit! in what vivid hues
His mind gives back the various forms
of things,

Caught in their fairest, happiest, atti-
tude!

While he is speaking, I have power to
see⁴⁶⁵

Even as he sees; but when his voice hath
ceased,

Then, with a sigh, sometimes I feel, as
now,

That combinations so serene and bright
Cannot be lasting in a world like ours,
Whose highest beauty, beautiful as it is,
Like that reflected in yon quiet pool,
Seems but a fleeting sunbeam's gift, whose
peace⁴⁷²

The sufferance only of a breath of air!

More had she said—but sportive shouts
were heard

Sent from the jocund hearts of those two
Boys,⁴⁷⁵

Who, bearing each a basket on his arm,
Down the green field came tripping after
us.

With caution we embarked; and now the
pair

For prouder service were address; but
each,

Wishful to leave an opening for my
choice,⁴⁸⁰

Dropped the light oar his eager hand had
seized.

Thanks given for that becoming courtesy,
Their place I took—and for a grateful
office

Pregnant with recollections of the time
When, on thy bosom, spacious Winder-
mere!⁴⁸⁵

A Youth, I practised this delightful art;
Tossed on the waves alone, or 'mid a
crew

Of joyous comrades. Soon as the reedy
marge

Was cleared, I dipped, with arms ac-
cordant, oars

Free from obstruction; and the boat ad-
vanced⁴⁹⁰

Through crystal water, smoothly as a
hawk,

That, disentangled from the shady boughs
Of some thick wood, her place of covert,
cleaves

With correspondent wings the abyss of
air.

—‘Observe,’ the Vicar said, ‘yon rocky
isle 495
With birch-trees fringed; my hand shall
guide the helm,
While thitherward we shape our course;
or while
We seek that other, on the western shore;
Where the bare columns of those lofty
firs,
Supporting gracefully a massy dome 500
Of sombre foliage, seem to imitate
A Grecian temple rising from the Deep.’

‘Turn where we may,’ said I, ‘we
cannot err
In this delicious region.’—Cultured slopes,
Wild tracts of forest-ground, and scat-
tered groves, 505
And mountains bare, or clothed with
ancient woods,
Surrounded us; and, as we held our way
Along the level of the glassy flood,
They ceased not to surround us; change
of place,
From kindred features diversely com-
bined, 510
Producing change of beauty ever new.
—Ah! that such beauty, varying in the light
Of living nature, cannot be portrayed
By words, nor by the pencil’s silent skill;
But is the property of him alone 515
Who hath beheld it, noted it with care,
And in his mind recorded it with love!
Suffice it, therefore, if the rural Muse
Vouchsafe sweet influence, while her
Poet speaks
Of trivial occupations well devised, 520
And unsought pleasures springing up by
chance;
As if some friendly Genius had ordained
That, as the day thus far had been en-
riched
By acquisition of sincere delight,
The same should be continued to its
close. 525

One spirit animating old and young,
A gipsy-fire we kindled on the shore
Of the fair Isle with birch-trees fringed—
and there,
Merrily seated in a ring, partook
A choice repast—served by our young
companions 530
With rival earnestness and kindred glee.
Launched from our hands the smooth
stone skimmed the lake;
With shouts we raised the echoes;—
still sounds
The lovely Girl supplied—a simple song,
Whose low tones reached not to the
distant rocks 535
To be repeated thence, but gently sank
Into our hearts; and charmed the peace-
ful flood.

Rapaciously we gathered flowery spoils
From land and water; lilies of each hue—
Golden and white, that float upon the
waves, 540
And court the wind; and leaves of that
shy plant,
(Her flowers were shed) the lily of the vale,
That loves the ground, and from the sun
withholds
Her pensive beauty; from the breeze her
sweets.

Such product, and such pastime, did
the place 545
And season yield; but, as we re-embarked,
Leaving, in quest of other scenes, the
shore
Of that wild spot, the Solitary said
In a low voice, yet careless who might
hear,
‘The fire, that burned so brightly to our
wish, 550
Where is it now?—Deserted on the
beach—
Dying, or dead! Nor shall the fanning
breeze
Revive its ashes. What care we for this,
Whose ends are gained? Behold an
emblem here
Of one day’s pleasure, and all mortal
joys! 555
And, in this unpremeditated slight
Of that which is no longer needed, see
The common course of human gratitude!’

This plaintive note disturbed not the
repose
Of the still evening. Right across the lake
Our pinnace moves; then, coasting creek
and bay, 561
Glades we behold, and into thickets peep,
Where couch the spotted deer; or raised
our eyes
To shaggy steeps on which the careless
goat
Browsed by the side of dashing water-
falls; 565
And thus the bark, meandering with the
shore,
Pursued her voyage, till a natural pier
Of jutting rock invited us to land.

Alert to follow as the Pastor led,
We clomb a green hill’s side; and, as we
clomb, 570
The Valley, opening out her bosom, gave
Fair prospect, intercepted less and less,
O’er the flat meadows and indented coast
Of the smooth lake, in compass seen:—
far off,
And yet conspicuous, stood the old
Church-tower, 575
In majesty presiding over fields
And habitations seemingly preserved

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK IX

From all intrusion of the restless world
By rocks impassable and mountains huge.

Soft heath this elevated spot supplied,
And choice of moss-clad stones, whereon
we couched 581

Or sate reclined; admiring quietly
The general aspect of the scene; but each
Not seldom over anxious to make known
His own discoveries; or to favourite
points 585

Directing notice, merely from a wish
To impart a joy, imperfect while un-
shared.

That rapturous moment never shall I
forget

When these particular interests were
effaced

From every mind!—Already had the
sun, 590

Sinking with less than ordinary state,
Attained his western bound; but rays of
light—

Now suddenly diverging from the orb
Retired behind the mountain-tops or
veiled

By the dense air—shot upwards to the
crown 595

Of the blue firmament—aloft, and wide:
And multitudes of little floating clouds,
Through their ethereal texture pierced—
ere we,

Who saw, of change were conscious—had
become

Vivid as fire; clouds separately poised,—
Innumerable multitude of forms 601

Scattered through half the circle of the
sky;

And giving back, and shedding each on
each,

With prodigal communion, the bright
hues

Which from the unapparent fount of
glory 605

They had imbibed, and ceased not to
receive.

That which the heavens displayed, the
liquid deep

Repeated; but with unity sublime!

While from the grassy mountain's open
side

We gazed, in silence hushed, with eyes
intent 610

On the refulgent spectacle, diffused
Through earth, sky, water, and all visible
space,

The Priest in holy transport thus ex-
claimed:

'Eternal Spirit! universal God!
Power inaccessible to human thought,
Save by degrees and steps which thou hast
deigned' 616

To furnish; for this effluence of thyself,
To furnish; for this effluence of thyself,

To the infirmity of mortal sense
Vouchsafed; this local transitory type
Of thy paternal splendours, and the
pomp 620

Of those who fill thy courts in highest
heaven,

The radiant Cherubim;—accept the
thanks

Which we, thy humble Creatures, here
convened,

Presume to offer; we, who—from the
breast 624

Of the frail earth, permitted to behold
The faint reflections only of thy face—

Are yet exalted, and in soul adore!
Such as they are who in thy presence
stand

Unsullied, incorruptible, and drink
Imperishable majesty streamed forth 630

From thy empyreal throne, the elect of
earth

Shall be—divested at the appointed hour
Of all dishonour, cleansed from mortal
stain.

—Accomplish, then, their number; and
conclude

Time's weary course! Or, if, by thy decree,
The consummation that will come by
stealth 636

Be yet far distant, let thy Word prevail,
Oh! let thy Word prevail, to take away

The sting of human nature. Spread the
law,

As it is written in thy holy book, 640

Throughout all lands: let every nation
hear

The high behest, and every heart obey;
Both for the love of purity, and hope

Which it affords, to such as do thy will
And persevere in good, that they shall
rise, 645

To have a nearer view of thee, in heaven.
—Father of good! this prayer in bounty
grant,

In mercy grant it, to thy wretched sons.
Then, nor till then, shall persecution
cease,

And cruel wars expire. The way is
marked, 650

The guide appointed, and the ransom
paid.

Alas! the nations, who of yore received
These tidings, and in Christian temples
meet

The sacred truth to acknowledge, linger
still;

Preferring bonds and darkness to a state
Of holy freedom, by redeeming love 656

Proffered to all, while yet on earth de-
tained.

'So fare the many; and the thoughtful
few,

Who in the anguish of their souls bewail

This dire perverseness, cannot choose but ask,
660

Shall it endure?—Shall enmity and strife,

Falsehood and guile, be left to sow their seed;

And the kind never perish? Is the hope fallacious, or shall righteousness obtain

A peaceable dominion, wide as earth, 665

And ne'er to fail? Shall that blest day arrive

When they, whose choice or lot it is to dwell

In crowded cities, without fear shall live studious of mutual benefit; and he,

Whom Morn awakens, among dews and flowers 670

Of every clime, to till the lonely field, Be happy in himself?—The law of faith

Working through love, such conquest shall it gain,

Such triumph over sin and guilt achieve? Almighty Lord, thy further grace impart! 675

And with that help the wonder shall be seen

Fulfilled, the hope accomplished; and thy praise

Be sung with transport and unceasing joy.

'Once,' and with wild demeanour, as he spake,

On us the venerable Pastor turned 680

His beaming eye that had been raised to Heaven,

'Once, while the Name, Jehovah, was a sound

Within the circuit of this sea-girt isle Unheard, the savage nations bowed the head

To Gods delighting in remorseless deeds; Gods which themselves had fashioned, to promote 686

Ill purposes, and flatter foul desires. Then, in the bosom of yon mountain-cove,

To those inventions of corrupted man Mysterious rites were solemnised; and there— 690

Amid impending rocks and gloomy woods—

Of those terrific Idols some received Such dismal service, that the loudest voice

Of the swoln cataracts (which now are heard

Soft murmuring) was too weak to overcome, 695

Though aided by wild winds, the groans and shrieks

Of human victims, offered up to appease Or to propitiate. And, if living eyes

Had visionary faculties to see The thing that hath been as the thing that is, 700

Agghast we might behold this crystal Mere

Bedimmed with smoke, in wreaths voluminous,

Flung from the body of devouring fires, To Taranis erected on the heights

By priestly hands, for sacrifice performed Exultingly, in view of open day 706

And full assemblage of a barbarous host; Or to Andates, female Power! who gave

(For so they fancied) glorious victory. —A few rude monuments of mountain-stone 710

Survive; all else is swept away.—How bright

The appearances of things! From such, how chang'd

The existing worship; and with those compared,

The worshippers how innocent and blest! So wide the difference, a willing mind 715

Might almost think, at this affecting hour, That paradise, the lost abode of man,

Was raised again: and to a happy few, In its original beauty, here restored.

'Whence but from thee, the true and only God, 720

And from the faith derived through Him who bled

Upon the cross, this marvellous advance Of good from evil; as if one extreme

Were left, the other gained.—O ye, who come 724

To kneel devoutly in yon reverend Pile, Called to such office by the peaceful sound

Of sabbath bells; and ye, who sleep in earth,

All cares forgotten, round its hallowed walls!

For you, in presence of this little band Gathered together on the green hill-side,

Your Pastor is emboldened to prefer 731

Vocal thanksgivings to the eternal King; Whose love, whose counsel, whose commands, have made

Your very poorest rich in peace of thought And in good works; and him, who is endowed 735

With scantiest knowledge, master of all truth

Which the salvation of his soul requires. Conscious of that abundant favour showed

On you, the children of my humble care, And this dear land, our country, while on earth 740

We sojourn, have I lifted up my soul, Joy giving voice to fervent gratitude.

These barren rocks, your stern inheritance; These fertile fields, that recompense your pains;

The shadowy vale, the sunny mountain-top; 745

Woods waving in the wind their lofty heads,

THE EXCURSION

[BOOK IX

Or ~~sat~~ ^{sat} the roaring waters, and the still—

They see the offering of my lifted hands,
They hear my lips present their sacrifice,
They know if I be silent, morn or even:
For, though in whispers speaking, the
full heart 751
Will find a vent; and thought is praise
to him,
Audible praise, to thee, omniscient Mind,
From whom all gifts descend, all blessings flow!

This vesper-service closed, without delay, 755
From that exalted station to the plain
Descending, we pursued our homeward
course,
In mute composure, o'er the shadowy
lake,
Under a faded sky. No trace remained
Of those celestial splendours; grey the
vault— 760
Pure, cloudless, ether; and the star of
eve
Was wanting; but inferior lights appeared
Faintly, too faint almost for sight; and
some
Above the darkened hills stood boldly
forth
In twinkling lustre, ere the boat attained
Her mooring-place; where, to the shelter-
ing tree, 766
Our youthful Voyagers bound fast her
prow,
With prompt yet careful hands. This
done, we paced
The dewy fields; but ere the Vicar's door
Was reached, the Solitary checked his
steps; 770

Then, intermingling thanks, on each be-
stowed

A farewell salutation; and, the like
Receiving, took the slender path that
leads

To the one cottage in the lonely dell:
But turned not without welcome promise
made 775

That he would share the pleasures and
pursuits

Of yet another summer's day, not loth
To wander with us through the fertile
vales,

And o'er the mountain-wastes. 'An-
other sun,'

Said he, 'shall shine upon us, ere we
part; 780

Another sun, and peradventure more;
If time, with free consent, be yours to
give,

And season favours.'

To enfeebled Power,
From this communion with uninjured
Minds,

What renovation had been brought; and
what 785

Degree of healing to a wounded spirit,
Dejected, and habitually disposed

To seek, in degradation of the Kind,
Excuse and solace for her own defects;

How far those erring notions were re-
formed; 790

And whether aught, of tendency as good
And pure, from further intercourse en-
sued;

This—if delightful hopes, as heretofore,
Inspire the serious song, and gentle Hearts

Cherish, and lofty Minds approve the
past— 795

My future labours may not leave untold.

NOTES

'If thou indeed derive thy light' (Inscription following title-page). Written (earliest draft) some time after 1813; first printed (amongst *Poems of Sentiment and Reflection*) in ed. 1827. Expanded (1836), and placed in its present position in ed. 1845.—Ed.

GUILT AND SORROW

Page 18.

Thirty stanzas (xxii-xxxiv, and xxxviii-l) of *Guilt and Sorrow* were printed in the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1798, under the title of *The Female Vagrant*. This poem of 1798—much altered from time to time, and ultimately cut down to twenty-five stanzas—appeared in successive edd. of the Poetical Works from 1815 to 1843. The whole, as it now stands, was first printed in the vol. entitled *Poems, Chiefly of Early and Late Years* (1842). 'Beside the changes made in these stanzas by Wordsworth from the point of view of poetic art, there are others the object of which seems to be to moderate the force of his indictment of society' (Dowden).—Ed.

Page 20, l. 81.

'And, hovering, round it often did a raven fly.' From a short MS. poem read to me when an undergraduate, by my schoolfellow and friend, Charles Farish, long since deceased. The verses were by a brother of his, a man of promising genius, who died young.—W.

THE BORDERERS

Page 29.

This Dramatic Piece, as noticed in its title-page, was composed in 1795-6. It lay nearly from that time till within the last two or three months unregarded among my papers, without being mentioned even to my most intimate friends. Having, however, impressions upon my mind which made me unwilling to destroy the MS., I determined to undertake the responsibility of publishing it during my own life, rather than impose upon my successors the task of deciding its fate. Accordingly it has been revised with some care; but, as it was at first written, and is now published, without any view to its exhibition upon the stage, not the slightest alteration has been made in the conduct of the story, or the composition of the characters: above all, in respect to the two leading Persons of the Drama, I felt no inducement to make any change. The study of human nature suggests this awful truth, that, as in the trials to which life subjects us, sin and crime are apt to start from their very opposite qualities, so are there no limits to the hardening of the heart, and the perversion of the understanding to which they may carry their slaves. During my long residence in France, while the revolution was rapidly advancing to its extreme of wickedness, I had frequent opportunities of being an eye-witness of this process, and it was while that knowledge was fresh upon my memory, that the Tragedy of 'The Borderers' was composed.—W.

TO A BUTTERFLY

Page 62.

The following pseudonyms occur in Wordsworth's poems:—*Emmeline*, *Emma* = Dorothy, the poet's sister; *Laura* = Dora, his daughter;

Edward, in the *Anecdote for Fathers* (p. 67) = little Basil Montagu, in his sister's *Address to a Child* (p. 63) = Johnnie, the poet's eldest son. It had been noted that each of these poetic substitutes, except Emma, is the exact metrical equivalent of the name for which it stands, and it is just possible, though not likely, that Emma may have been used as = Dolly, the name by which Dorothy was sometimes called in her youth. But there is no evidence that the poet ever so called her, and it is more probable that the equivalences were accidental. Anyhow, to argue from them that the Louisa of *I met Louisa in the shade* must be intended for Joanna Hutchinson is quite unjustifiable. This poem, like several if not all of the poems on Lucy, was inspired in part, if not wholly, by his sister Dorothy. It is worth noting, perhaps, that whilst Wordsworth refers to his wife Mary, to his daughter Dora (except in one place where she appears as Laura), and to Sara Hutchinson by their names, the name Dorothy is nowhere found in his poetry.

THE MOTHER'S RETURN

Page 64.

This poem was written by Dorothy Wordsworth at Coleorton, on the eve of the return of Wordsworth and his wife from London where they had spent a month (prob. April) in 1807.—Ed.

THE NORMAN BOY

Page 72.

'Among ancient Trees there are few, I believe, at least in France, so worthy of attention as an Oak which may be seen in the "Pays de Caux," about a league from Yvetot, close to the church, and in the burial-ground of Allonville.

'The height of this Tree does not answer to its girth; the trunk, from the roots to the summit, forms a complete cone; and the inside of this cone is hollow throughout the whole of its height.

'Such is the oak of Allonville, in its state of nature. The hand of Man, however, has endeavoured to impress upon it a character still more interesting, by adding a religious feeling to the respect which its age naturally inspires.

'The lower part of its hollow trunk has been transformed into a Chapel of six or seven feet in diameter, carefully wainscotted and paved, and an open iron gate guards the humble Sanctuary.

'Leading to it there is a staircase, which twists round the body of the Tree. At certain seasons of the year divine service is performed in this Chapel.

'The summit has been broken off many years, but there is a surface at the top of the trunk, of the diameter of a very large tree, and from it rises a pointed roof, covered with slates, in the form of a steeple, which is surmounted with an iron Cross, that rises in a picturesque manner from the middle of the leaves, like an ancient Hermitage above the surrounding Wood.

'Over the entrance to the Chapel an Inscription appears, which informs us it was erected by the Abbé du Détroit, Curate of Allonville in the year 1696; and over a door is another, dedicating it "To Our Lady of Peace."

Vide No. 14, *Saturday Magazine*.—W.

NOTES

TO —

Page 87.

No doubt addressed to the Poet's daughter Dora. See *The Longest Day*, stanza xvi.—Ed.

THE EMIGRANT MOTHER

Page 95.

This poem was written in the orchard, Townend, Grasmere, in the spring of 1802.—Ed.

TO THE DAISY

Page 124.

This poem, and two others to the same flower, were written in the year 1802; which is mentioned, because in some of the ideas, though not in the manner in which those ideas are connected, and likewise even in some of the expressions, there is a resemblance to passages in a poem (lately published) of Mr. Montgomery's, entitled 'A Field Flower.' This being said, Mr. Montgomery will not think any apology due to him; I cannot, however, help addressing him in the words of the Father of English Poets:

'Though it happen me to rehersin
That ye han in your freshe songis saied,
Forberth me, and beth not ill apaled,
Sith that ye se I doe it in the honour
Of Love, and eke in service of the Flour.'
1807.—W.

THE SEVEN SISTERS

Page 127.

The story of this poem is from the German of Frederica Brun [*for*. 1765-1835.—Ed.].—W.

THE DANISH BOY

Page 131.

'These stanzas were designed to introduce a Ballad upon the Story of a Danish Prince who had fled from Battle, and, for the sake of the valuables about him, was murdered by the Inhabitant of a Cottage in which he had taken refuge. The House fell under a curse, and the Spirit of the Youth, it was believed, haunted the Valley where the crime had been committed.'—W. 1827.

THE WAGGONER

Page 137.

Several years after the event that forms the subject of the poem, in company with my friend, the late Mr. Coleridge, I happened to fall in with the person to whom the name of Benjamin is given. Upon our expressing regret that we had not, for a long time, seen upon the road either him or his wagon, he said:—'They could not do without me; and as to the man who was put in my place, no good could come out of him; he was a man of no ideas.'

The fact of my discarded hero's getting the horses out of a great difficulty with a word, as related in the poem, was told me by an eye-witness.—W.

Page 137, l. 3.

'The buzzing dor-hawk, round and round, is wheeling.' When the poem was first written the note of the bird was thus described:

'The Night-hawk is singing his frog-like tune, Twirling his watchman's rattle about—'

but from unwillingness to startle the reader at the outset by so bold a mode of expression, the passage was altered as it now stands.—W.

After the line, 'Can any mortal clog come to her,' (p. 138, l. 28) followed in the MS. an incident which has been kept back. Part of the suppressed verses shall here be given as a gratification of private feeling, which the well-disposed reader will find no difficulty in excusing. They are now printed for the first time.

Can any mortal clog come to her?

It can:

But Benjamin, in his vexation,
Possesses inward consolation;
He knows his ground, and hopes to find
A spot with all things to his mind,
An upright mural block of stone,
Moist with pure water trickling down,
A slender spring; but kind to man
It is, a true Samaritan;
Close to the highway, pouring out
Its offering from a chink or spout;
Whence all, how'er athirst, or drooping
With toil, may drink, and without stooping.

Cries Benjamin 'Where is it, where?
Voice it hath none, but must be near.'
—A star, declining towards the west,
Upon the watery surface threw
Its image tremulously imprest,
That just marked out the object and withdrew
Right welcome service!

ROCK OF NAMES!¹

Light is the strain, but not unjust
To Thee and Thy memorial-trust
That once seemed only to express
Love that was love in idleness;
Tokens, as year hath followed year
How changed, alas, in character!
For they were graven on thy smooth breast
By hands of those my soul loved best;
Meek women, men as true and brave
As ever went to a hopeful grave:
Their hands and mine, when side by side
With kindred zeal and mutual pride,
We worked until the initials took
Shapes that defied a scornful look.—
Long as for us a genial feeling
Survives, or one in need of healing,
The power, dear Rock, around thee cast,
Thy monumental power, shall last
For me and mine! O thought of pain,
That would impair it or profane!
Take all in kindness then, as I did
With a staid heart but playful head;
And fall not Thou, loved Rock! to keep
Thy charge when we are laid asleep.—W.

Page 148.

'She was a Phantom of delight.' 'She was a Phantom of delight, he [Wordsworth] said, was written "on his dear wife".' (Hon. Justice Coleridge in *Memoirs of Wordsworth*, ii. 306.)—Ed.

Page 148.

'O Nightingale! thou surely art.' Written probably at Coleorton, in Nov. or Dec., 1806.—Ed.

¹ The 'Rock of Names' is at Thirlmere, 'on the right hand of the road a short way past Waterhead.' Upon it were carved the initials of William, Dorothy and John Wordsworth, of S. T. Coleridge, and of Mary and Sarah Hutchinson.—Ed.

NOTES

RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE

Page 155.

W. wrote as follows to some friends who had received a copy of *Resolution and Independence* in manuscript:—"I will explain to you in prose my feelings in writing that poem. . . . I describe myself as having been exalted to the highest pitch of delight by the joyousness and beauty of nature; and then as depressed, even in the midst of those beautiful objects, to the lowest dejection and despair. A young poet in the midst of the happiness of nature is described as overwhelmed by the thoughts of the miserable reverses which have befallen the happiest of all men, viz. poets. I think of this till I am so deeply impressed with it, that I consider the manner in which I was rescued from my dejection and despair almost as an interposition of Providence. A person reading the poem with feelings like mine will have been awed and controlled, expecting something spiritual or supernatural. What is brought forward? A lonely place, "a pond by which an old man was, far from all house or home;" not *stood*, nor *sat*, but *was*—the figure presented in the most naked simplicity possible. This feeling of spirituality or supernaturalness is again referred to as being strong in my mind in this passage. How came he here? thought I, or what can he be doing? I then describe him, whether ill or well is not for me to judge with perfect confidence; but this I can confidently affirm, that though I believe God has given me a strong imagination, I cannot conceive a figure more impressive than that of an old man like this, the survivor of a wife and ten children, travelling alone among the mountains and all lonely places, carrying with him his own fortune, and the necessities which an unjust state of society has laid upon him."—*Memoirs of Wordsworth*, i. 172, 173.

THE THORN

Page 157.

This Poem ought to have been preceded by an introductory Poem, which I have been prevented from writing by never having felt myself in a mood when it was probable that I should write it well. The character which I have here introduced speaking is sufficiently common. The Reader will perhaps have a general notion of it, if he has ever known a man, a captain of a small trading vessel, for example, who being past the middle age of life, had become a small independent trader, and was not a native, but was accustomed to live. Such men, having little to do, become credulous and talkative from indolence; and from the same cause, and other predisposing causes by which it is probable that such men may have been affected, they are prone to superstition. On which account it appeared to me proper to select a character like this to exhibit some of the general laws by which superstition acts upon the mind. Superstitious men are almost always men of slow faculties and deep feelings; their minds are not loose, but adhesive; they have a reasonable share of imagination, by which word I mean the faculty which produces impressive effects out of

follow the turns of passion, always different, yet not palpably different, by which their conversation is swayed. I had two objects to attain; first, to represent a picture which should not be unimpressive, yet consistent with the character that should describe it; secondly, while I adhered to the style in which such persons describe, to take care that words, which in their minds are impregnated with passion, should likewise convey passion to Readers who are not accustomed to sympathize with men feeling in that manner or using such language. It seemed to me that this might be done by calling in the assistance of Lyrical and rapid Metre. It was necessary that the Poem, to be natural, should in reality move slowly; yet I hoped that, by the aid of the metre, to those who should at all enter into the spirit of the Poem, it would appear to move quickly. The Reader will have the kindness to excuse this note, as I am sensible that an introductory Poem is necessary to give the Poem its full effect.

Upon this occasion I will request permission to add a few words closely connected with 'The Thorn' and many other Poems in these volumes. There is a numerous class of readers who imagine that the same words cannot be repeated without tautology; this is a great error: virtual tautology is much oftener produced by using different words when the meaning is exactly the same. Words, a Poet's words more particularly, ought to be weighed in the balance of feeling, and not measured by the space which they occupy upon paper. For the Reader cannot be too often reminded that Poetry is passion: it is the history or science of feelings. Now every man must know that an attempt is rarely made to communicate impassioned feelings without something of an accompanying consciousness of the inadequateness of our own powers, or the deficiencies of language. During such efforts there will be a craving in the mind, and as long as it is unsatisfied the speaker will cling to the same words, or words of the same character. There are also various other reasons why repetition and apparent tautology are frequently beauties of the highest kind. Among the chief of these reasons is the interest which the mind attaches to words, not only as symbols of the passion, but as *things*, active and efficient, which are of themselves part of the passion. And further, from a spirit of fondness, exultation, and gratitude, the mind luxuriates in the repetition of words which appear successfully to communicate its feelings. The truth of these remarks might be illustrated by numerous passages from the Bible

verses 12th, 27th, and part of 28th. See also the whole of that tumultuous and wonderful Poem.—W. 1800—1805.

SONG AT THE FEAST, &c.

Page 162.

Henry Lord Clifford, &c., &c., who is the subject of this poem, was the son of John Lord Clifford, who was slain at Towton Field, which John Lord Clifford, as is known to the reader of English history, was the person who after the battle of Wakefield slew, in the pursuit, the young Earl

by accumulated indolence.

It was my wish in this poem to show the manner in which such men cleave to the same ideas; and to

A deed which worthily blemished the author (saith Speed); but who, as he adds, 'dare promise

NOTES

anything temperate of himself in the heat of martial fury? chiefly, ~~when~~ it was resolved not to leave any branch of the York line standing; for so one maketh this Lord to speak.' This, no doubt, I would observe by the bye, was an action sufficiently in the vindictive spirit of the times, and yet not altogether so bad as represented; 'for the Earl was no child, as some writers would have him, but able to bear arms, being sixteen or seventeen years of age, as is evident from this, (say the Memoirs of the Countess of Pembroke, who was laudably anxious to wipe away, as far as could be, this stigma from the illustrious name to which she was born,) that he was the next child to King Edward the Fourth, which his mother had by Richard Duke of York, and that King was then eighteen years of age; and for the small distance betwixt her children, see Austin Vincent, in his "Book of Nobility," p. 622, where he writes of them all.' It may further be observed, that Lord Clifford, who was then himself only twenty-five years of age, had been a leading man and commander two or three years together in the army of Lancaster, before this time; and, therefore, would be less likely to think that the Earl of Rutland might be entitled to mercy from his youth.—But independent of this act, at best a cruel and savage one, the family of Clifford had done enough to draw upon them the vehement hatred of the House of York: so that after the Battle of Towton there was no hope for them but in flight and concealment. Henry, the subject of the poem, was deprived of his estate and honours during the space of twenty-four years; all which time he lived as a shepherd in Yorkshire, or in Cumberland, where the estate of his father-in-law (Sir Lancelot Threlkeld) lay. He was restored to his estate and honours in the first year of Henry the Seventh. It is recorded that, 'when called to Parliament, he behaved nobly and wisely; but otherwise came seldom to London or the Court; and rather delighted to live in the country, where he repaired several of his Castles, which had gone to decay during the late troubles.' Thus far is chiefly collected from Nicholson and Burn; and I can add, from my own knowledge, that there is a tradition current in the village of Threlkeld and its neighbourhood, his principal retreat, that, in the course of his shepherd-life, he had acquired great astronomical knowledge. I cannot conclude this note without adding a word upon the subject of those numerous and noble feudal edifices, spoken of in the poem, the ruins of some of which are, at this day, so great an ornament to that interesting country. The Cliffords had always been distinguished for an honourable pride in these Castles; and we have seen that, after the wars of York and Lancaster, they were rebuilt; in the civil wars of Charles the First they were again laid waste, and again restored almost to their former magnificence by the celebrated Lady Anne Clifford, Countess of Pembroke, &c., &c. Not more than twenty-five years after this was done, when the estates of Clifford had passed into the family of Tufon, three of these Castles, namely, Brough, Brougham, and Pendragon, were demolished, and the timber and other materials sold by Thomas Earl of Thanet. We will hope that, when this order was issued, the Earl had not consulted the text of Isaiah, 58th chap. 12th verse, to which the inscription placed over the gate of Pendragon Castle, by the Countess of Pembroke (I believe his grandmother), at the time she repaired that structure, refers the reader:—'*And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt*

be called the repai'r of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in.' The Earl of Thanet, the present possessor of the Estates, with a due respect for the memory of his ancestors, and a proper sense of the value and beauty of these remains of antiquity, has (I am told) given orders that they shall be preserved from all depredations.—W.

Page 162, l. 27.

'Earth helped him with the cry of blood.' This line is from 'The Battle of Bosworth Field,' by Sir John Beaumont (brother to the Dramatist), whose poems are written with much spirit, elegance, and harmony; and have deservedly been reprinted lately in Chalmers' 'Collection of English Poets.'—W.

Page 163, ll. 122, 123.

'And both the undying fish that swim
Through Bowscale-tarn, &c.]

It is imagined by the people of the country that there are two immortal fish, inhabitants of this tarn, which lies in the mountains not far from Threlkeld.—Blencathara, mentioned before, is the old and proper name of the mountain vulgarly called Saddle-back.—W.

Page 163, ll. 142, 143.

'Armour rusting in his halls
On the blood of Clifford calls.'

The martial character of the Cliffords is well known to the readers of English history; but it may not be improper here to say, by way of comment on these lines and what follows, that besides several others who perished in the same manner, the four immediate progenitors of the person in whose hearing this is supposed to be spoken, all died in the field.—W.

LINES COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY

Page 163.

I have not ventured to call this Poem an Ode; but it was written with a hope that in the transitions and the impassioned music of the versification, would be found the principal requisites, of that species of composition.—W. 1802-5.

LAODAMIA

Page 166.

In 1827 a change of unique importance—amounting to an absolute reversal of the central motive of the poem—was made in the penultimate stanza of *Laodamia*. In edd. 1815, 1820 the heroine's love, while described as at war with Reason, is expressly declared guiltless; and she is dismissed to the serene region tenanted by happy Ghosts, there 'to gather flowers of blissful quiet,' &c., &c. In 1827 all this is reversed. Love, indulged 'in Reason's spite,' is now declared a crime; and *Laodamia*, as manifestly guilty, is 'doomed to wander in a grosser clime, Apart from happy Ghosts.' In 1832 the severity of the sentence is mitigated: not now to dateless exile from the presence of her beloved, but to a limited period of exclusion,—an expiatory or purgatorial term of banishment—is she sentenced by 'the just Gods whom no weak pity moves.' Changes made subsequently to 1832 in no way affect the question of *Laodamia's* doom. The several forms successively assumed by this stanza must now be given:—

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Ah, judge her gently who so deeply loved!
Her, who, in reason's spite, yet without crime,
Was in a trance of passion thus removed;
Delivered from the galling yoke of time
And these frail elements—to gather flowers
Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.

Edd. 1815, 1820.

By no weak pity might the Gods be moved;
She who thus perished not without the crime
Of Lovers that in Reason's spite have loved,
Was doomed to wander in a grosser clime
Apart from happy Ghosts—that gather flowers
Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.

Ed. 1827.

Edd. 1832 and 1836 follow ed. 1827 exactly, except in line 4, which in them runs as follows:—

'Was doomed to wear out her appointed time.'

She—who, though warned, exhorted, and reproved,
Thus died, from passion desperate to a crime—
By the just Gods, whom no weak pity moved,
Was doomed to wear out her appointed time
Apart from happy Ghosts, that gather flowers, &c.
Ed. 1840–1843.

Our text follows the version of edd. 1845 and 1849. In defence of the change effected in 1827, Wordsworth wrote to his nephew John Wordsworth in 1831:—'As first written, the heroine was dismissed to happiness in Elysium. To what purpose then the mission of Proteus? He exhorts her to moderate her passion; the exhortation is fruitless, and no punishment follows. So it stood: at present she is placed among unhappy ghosts for disregard of the exhortation. Virgil also places her there; but compare the two passages and give me your opinion' (*William Wordsworth*, by Elizabeth Wordsworth, p. 131). Thus Laodamia probably owes the mitigated doom subsequently (ed. 1832) pronounced upon her to the interposition of the poet's nephew John Wordsworth.—ED.

DION

Page 169.

This poem began with the following stanza, which has been displaced on account of its detaining the reader too long from the subject, and as rather precluding, than preparing for the due effect of the allusion to the genius of Plato:

'Fair is the Swan, whose majesty, prevailing,'
&c., &c., &c.—W.

Page 172, l. 114.

'Living hill.'

'a while the living hill
Heaved with convulsive throes, and all was still.'
DR. DARWIN.—W.

THE WISHING-GATE DESTROYED

Page 178.

'In the Vale of Grasmere, by the side of the old highway leading to Ambleside, is a gate which, time out of mind, has been called the Wishing-gate.'

Having been told, upon what I thought good authority, that this gate had been destroyed, and the opening, where it hung, walled up, I gave vent immediately to my feelings in these stanzas. But going to the place some time after, I found, with much delight, my old favourite unmolested.—W.

PETER BELL

Page 188.

After line 515 occurred the stanza (immortalised by Shelley) omitted by Wordsworth after 1819:

'Is it a party in a parlour?

Cramm'd just as they on earth were cram'd—
Some sipping punch, some sipping tea,
But, as you by their faces see,
All silent and all damn'd!

In Crabb Robinson's Diary, June 6, 1812, we find: 'Mrs. Basil Montagu told me she had no doubt she had suggested this image to Wordsworth by relating to him an anecdote. A person, walking in a friend's garden, looking in at a window, saw a company of ladies at a table near the window with countenances fixed. In an instant he was aware of their condition, and broke the window. He saved them from incipient suffocation.'—ED.

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

Page 199.

Through the kindness of the author, Professor Edward Dowden, I am enabled to print at length the following valuable note upon the grouping of the Miscellaneous Sonnets. The note originally appeared in the Aldine Edition of Wordsworth's Poems, vol. iii, p. 327 (ed. 1892).—ED.

'A group of Miscellaneous Sonnets was first published by Wordsworth in the "Poems in two volumes," 1807. In subsequent editions the number of Sonnets was increased, and the arrangement was altered. It seems to me evident that although these poems were written at various widely-parted times, they were finally arranged so as to illustrate one another, and form not indeed a linked chain of sonnets but a sequence as far as a sequence can be made from disconnected pieces by happy ordering. Let me try to show that this is the case with at least the thirty-six sonnets of Part I.

'I. Prefatory Sonnet on the Sonnet: contentment in limitation.

'II. The cottage of the poor; its beauty and happiness; contentment in limitation.

'III. The native vale of the child; the child's content in limitation altered by growth to manhood.

'IV. A little cottage, but glorified by Skiddaw and by the Muses.

'V. The glory of Skiddaw and its streams, though unsung by the Muses.

'VI. The glory of a little mountain stream sanctified by memory and the affections.

'VII. A mountain lake, glorified even more by human love than by Fancy and the Muses.

'VIII. Vale and mountain glorified by friendship and the art of music.

'IX. Immortality conferred on the beauty of nature by a friend's art of painting.

'X. True art springs from the human heart, and all external things are modified by human affections.

'XI. Fancy and the Muse also deal with outward nature and add a grace and dignity to it.

'XII, XIII, XIV, three sonnets "To Sleep" stand unconnected with what precedes and serve as a resting-place.

'XV. The simplicity of the life of nature; the cumbrous pride of the artificial life.

'XVI. Walton; the happiness of a life "nobly versed in simple discipline."

'XVII. Dyer; the modesty and simplicity of his verse.

'XVIII. "Peter Bell," a poem of nature, ill received in an artificial age.

'XIX. Loss of cottage simplicity and its joys: the decay of spinning.

'XX. Spinning—a lost art: intellectual pride of the age.

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'XXI. Pious use of the cottage fleece on Easter Sunday: contrast with these days of mechanical progress.

'XXII. Decay of rustic piety: Easter and Christmas church-going.

'XXIII. Piety of rural nuptials: love and religion united.

'XXIV-XXVI. Love and devotion have fitly led up to the sonnets translated from Michael Angelo, on mortal love leading to God.

'XXVII. And here is a fitting place for the contemplation of Death.

'XXVIII, XXIX. Beauty and repose in death a source of faith.

'XXX. But there are glad childlike hearts untouched by great solemnities, yet pure and sacred: mystery of the sea.

'XXXI. The "reverential fear" of the sea, connected with a ship setting forth.

'XXXII. A ship singled out for love.

'XXXIII. How few of these glories and mysteries of Nature are felt by us! The mystery and beauty of the sea.

'XXXIV. The poets of Fashion contrasted with the poet of Nature.

'XXXV. Ennui and misanthropy of the poet of worldlings; how true Imagination transmutes the sorrows of life.

'XXXVI. Memorial Sonnet to Raisley Calvert who enabled the author to live the life poetic.

The reader who follows and verifies the above analysis can hardly doubt that Wordsworth was studious to arrange his sonnets with a view to their mutual illustration.'

Page 199, Dedication, l. 14.

'Something less than joy, but more than dull content.'

COUNTRESS OF WINCHILSEA.—W.

SONNET XI

Page 216.

'Wild Redbreast!' &c. This Sonnet, as Poetry, explains itself, yet the scene of the incident having been a wild wood, it may be doubted, as a point of natural history, whether the bird was aware that his attentions were bestowed upon a human, or even a living, creature. But a Redbreast will perch upon the foot of a gardener at work, and alight on the handle of the spade when his hand is half upon it—this I have seen. And under my own roof I have witnessed affecting instances of the creature's friendly visits to the chambers of sick persons, as described in the verses to the Redbreast, p. 114. One of these welcome intruders used frequently to roost upon a nail in the wall, from which a picture had hung, and was ready, as morning came, to pipe his song in the hearing of the invalid, who had been long confined to her room. These attachments to a particular person, when marked and continued, used to be reckoned ominous; but the superstition is passing away.—W.

AT THE GRAVE OF BURNS

Page 226.

The following is extracted from the journal of my fellow-traveller, to which, as persons acquainted with my poems will know, I have been obliged on other occasions:

'Dumfries, August, 1803.

On our way to the churchyard where Burns is buried, we were accompanied by a bookseller, who showed us the outside of Burns's house, where he

had lived the last three years of his life, and where he died. It has a mean appearance, and is in a bye situation; the front whitewashed, dirty about the doors, as most Scotch houses are; flowering plants in the window. Went to visit his grave; he lies in a corner of the churchyard, and his second son, Francis Wallace, beside him. There is no stone to mark the spot; but a hundred guineas have been collected to be expended upon some sort of monument. "There," said the bookseller, pointing to a pompous monument, "lies Mr.—(I have forgotten the name)—a remarkably clever man; he was an attorney, and scarcely ever lost a cause he undertook. Burns made many a lampoon upon him, and there they rest as you see." We looked at Burns's grave with melancholy and painful reflections, repeating to each other his own poet's epitaph:—

'Is there a man,' &c.

'The churchyard is full of gravestones and expensive monuments, in all sorts of fantastic shapes—obelisk-wise, pillar-wise, &c. When our guide had left us we turned again to Burns's grave, and afterwards went to his house, wishing to enquire after Mrs. Burns, who had gone to spend some time by the sea-shore with her children. We spoke to the maid-servant at the door, who invited us forward, and we sat down in the parlour. The walls were coloured with a blue wash; on one side of the fire was a mahogany desk; opposite the window a clock, which Burns mentions, in one of his letters, having received as a present. The house was cleanly and neat in the inside, the stairs of stone scoured white, the kitchen on the right side of the passage, the parlour on the left. In the room above the parlour the poet died, and his son, very lately, in the same room. The servant told us she had lived four years with Mrs. Burns, who was now in great sorrow for the death of Wallace. She said that Mrs. B's youngest son was now at Christ's Hospital. We were glad to leave Dumfries, where we could think of little but poor Burns, and his moving about on that unpoetic ground. In our road to Brownhill, the next stage, we passed Ellisland, at a little distance on our right—his farmhouse. Our pleasure in looking round would have been still greater, if the road had led us nearer the spot.

'I cannot take leave of this country which we passed through to-day, without mentioning that we saw the Cumberland mountains within half-a-mile of Ellisland, Burns's house, the last view we had of them. Drayton has prettily described the connection, which this neighbourhood has with ours, when he makes Skiddaw say,—

"Scruell, from the sky
That Annandale doth crown, with a most amorous eye
Salutes me every day, or at my pride looks grim,
Oft threatening me with clouds, as I oft threaten him."

These lines came to my brother's memory, as well as the Cumberland saying.—

"If Skiddaw hath a cap
Scruell wots well of that."

'We talked of Burns, and of the prospect he must have had, perhaps from his own door, of Skiddaw and his companions: indulging ourselves in the fancy that we might have been personally known to each other, and he have looked upon those objects with more pleasure for our sakes.'—W.

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SONNET COMPOSED AT — CASTLE

Page 232.

In the MS. copy of this Sonnet which Wordsworth sent to Walter Scott (Oct. 16, 1803) the first line ran as follows:

'Now, as I live, I pity that great Lord
Whom mere despite,' &c.

'In that original shape,' says Lockhart, 'Scott always recited it [the sonnet], and few lines in the language were more frequently in his mouth.'—Ed.

THE BLIND HIGHLAND BOY

Page 234.

In Ed. 1807, the vessel in which the boy embarked was a common wash-tub:

'But say, what was it? Thought of fear!
Well may ye tremble when ye hear!
—A Household Tub, like one of those
Which women use to wash their clothes,
This carried the blind Boy.'

The shell was substituted (in 1815) for the tub, on the suggestion of Coleridge—a change of which Charles Lamb and Barron Field strongly disapproved.—Ed.

SONNET III

Page 241.

'Jones! as from Calais southward,'] (See Dedication to Descriptive Sketches, p. 469.)

This excellent Person, one of my earliest and dearest friends, died in the year 1835. We were undergraduates together of the same year, at the same college; and companions in many a delightful ramble through his own romantic Country of North Wales. Much of the latter part of his life he passed in comparative solitude; which I know was often cheered by remembrance of our youthful adventures, and of the beautiful regions which, at home and abroad, we had visited together. Our long friendship was never subject to a moment's interruption;—and while revising these volumes for the last time, I have been so often reminded of my loss, with a not unpleasing sadness, that I trust the Reader will excuse this passing mention of a Man who well deserves from me something more than so brief a notice. Let me only add, that during the middle part of his life he resided many years (as Incumbent of the Living) at a Parsonage in Oxfordshire, which is the subject of the 7th of the 'Miscellaneous Sonnets,' Part 3.—W.

SONNET VII

Page 242.

In this and a succeeding sonnet on the same subject, let me be understood as a Poet availing himself of the situation which the King of Sweden occupied, and of the principles avowed in his MANIFESTOES; as laying hold of these advantages for the purpose of embodying moral truths. This remark might, perhaps, as well have been suppressed; for to those who may be in sympathy with the course of these Poems, it will be superfluous; and will, I fear, be thrown away upon that other class, whose besotted admiration of the intoxicated despot hereafter placed in contrast with him, is the most melancholy evidence of degradation in British feeling and intellect which the times have furnished.—W.

NOVEMBER, 1806

Page 247.

'Danger which they fear, and honour which they understand not.' Words in Lord Brooke's Life of Sir F. Sydney.—W.

SONNET XVI

Page 251.

'Zaragoza.' In this sonnet I am under some obligations to one of an Italian author, to which I cannot refer.—W.

THE GERMANS ON THE HEIGHTS OF HOCHHEIM

Page 256.

The event is thus recorded in the journals of the day:—'When the Austrians took Hochheim, in one part of the engagement they got to the brow of the hill, whence they had their first view of the Rhine. They instantly halted—not a gun was fired—not a voice heard; they stood gazing on the river with those feelings which the events of the last fifteen years at once called up. Prince Schwartzemberg rode up to know the cause of this sudden stop; they then gave three cheers, rushed after the enemy, and drove them into the water.'—W.

THANKSGIVING ODE

Page 261.

Wholly unworthy of touching upon the momentous subject here treated would that Poet be, before whose eyes the present distresses under which this kingdom labours could interpose a veil sufficiently thick to hide, or even to obscure, the splendour of this great moral triumph. If I have given way to exultation, unchecked by these distresses, it might be sufficient to protect me from a charge of insensibility, should I state my own belief that the sufferings will be transitory. Upon the wisdom of a very large majority of the British nation rested that generosity which poured out the treasures of this country for the deliverance of Europe; and in the same national wisdom, presiding in time of peace over an energy not inferior to that which has been displayed in war, they confide, who encourage a firm hope, that the cup of our wealth will be gradually replenished. There will, doubtless, be no few ready to indulge in regrets and repinings; and to feed a morbid satisfaction, by aggravating these burthens in imagination; in order that calamity so confidently prophesied, as it has not taken the shape which their sagacity allotted to it, may appear as grievous as possible under another. But the body of the nation will not quarrel with the gain, because it might have been purchased at a less price: and, acknowledging in these sufferings, which they feel to have been in a great degree unavoidable, a consecration of their noble efforts, they will vigorously apply themselves to remedy the evil.

Nor is it at the expense of rational patriotism, or in disregard of sound philosophy, that I have given vent to feelings tending to encourage a martial spirit in the bosoms of my countrymen, at a time when there is a general outcry against the prevalence of these dispositions. The British army, both by its skill and valour in the field, and by the discipline which rendered it, to the inhabitants of the several countries where its operations were carried on, a protection from the violence of their own troops, has performed services that will not allow the language of gratitude and admiration to

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be suppressed or restrained (whatever be the temper of the public mind) through a scrupulous dread lest the tribute due to the past should prove an injurious incentive for the future. Every man deserving the name of Briton adds his voice to the chorus which extols the exploits of his countrymen, with a consciousness, at times overpowering the effort, that they transcend all praise. But this particular sentiment, thus irresistibly excited, is not sufficient. The nation would err grievously, if she suffered the abuse which other states have made of military power to prevent her from perceiving that no people ever was or can be, independent, free, or secure, much less great, in any sane application of the word, without a cultivation of military virtues. Nor let it be overlooked, that the benefits derivable from these sources are placed within the reach of Great Britain, under conditions peculiarly favourable. The same insular position which, by rendering territorial incorporation impossible, utterly precludes the desire of conquest under the most seductive shape it can assume, enables her to rely, for her defence against foreign foes, chiefly upon a species of armed force from which her own liberties have nothing to fear. Such are the privileges of her situation; and, by permitting, they invite her to give way to the courageous instincts of human nature, and to strengthen and refine them by culture.

But some have more than insinuated that a design exists to subvert the civil character of the English people by unconstitutional applications and unnecessary increase of military power. The advisers and abettors of such a design, were it possible that it should exist, would be guilty of the most heinous crime, which, upon this planet, can be committed. Trusting that this apprehension arises from the delusive influences of an honourable jealousy, let me hope that the martial qualities which I venerate will be fostered by adhering to those good old usages which experience has sanctioned; and by availing ourselves of new means of indisputable promise: particularly by applying, in its utmost possible extent, that system of tuition whose master-spring is a habit of gradually enlightened subordination;—by imparting knowledge, civil, moral, and religious, in such measure that the mind, among all classes of the community, may love, admire, and be prepared and accomplished to defend, that country under whose protection its faculties have been unfolded, and its riches acquired;—by just dealing towards all orders of the state, so that, no members of it being trampled upon, courage may everywhere continue to rest immovably upon its ancient English foundation, personal self-respect;—by adequate rewards, and permanent honours, conferred upon the deserving;—by encouraging athletic exercises and manly sports among the peasantry of the country;—and by especial care to provide and support institutions, in which, during a time of peace, a reasonable proportion of the youth of the country may be instructed in military science.

I have only to add, that I should feel little satisfaction in giving to the world these limited attempts to celebrate the virtues of my country, if I did not encourage a hope that a subject, which it has fallen within my province to treat only in the mass, will by other poets be illustrated in that detail which its importance calls for, and which will allow opportunities to give the merited applause to PERSONS as well as to THINGS.

The ode was published along with other pieces, now interspersed through these volumes.—W.

'Had it been a hymn, uttering the sentiments of

a multitude, a stanza would have been indispensable. But though I have called it a "Thanksgiving Ode," strictly speaking it is not so, but a poem composed, or supposed to be composed, on the morning of the thanksgiving, uttering the sentiments of an individual upon that occasion. It is a dramatised ejaculation; and this, if anything can, must excuse the irregular frame of the metre' (Letter of Wordsworth to Southey, 1816, in *Memoirs* by Bishop Wordsworth, ii. 60, 61.)—ED.

Page 262, l. 122.

'Discipline the rule whereof is passion.'
LORD BROOKE.—W.

SONNET I

Page 264.

If in this sonnet I should seem to have borne a little too hard upon the personal appearance of the worthy Poissards of Calais, let me take shelter under the authority of my lamented friend, the late Sir George Beaumont. He, a most accurate observer, used to say of them, that their features and countenances seemed to have conformed to those of the creatures they dealt in; at all events the resemblance was striking.—W.

BRUGÈS

Page 264.

This is not the first poetical tribute which in our times has been paid to this beautiful city. Mr. Southey, in the 'Poet's Pilgrimage,' speaks of it in lines which I cannot deny myself the pleasure of connecting with my own.

'Time hath not wronged her, nor hath ruin sought

Rudely her splendid structures to destroy,
Save in those recent days, with evil fraught,

When mutability, in drunken joy
Triumphant, and from all restraint released,
Let loose her fierce and many-headed beast.

But for the scars in that unhappy rage
Inflicted, firm she stands and undecayed;
Like our first Sires, a beautiful old age
Is hers in venerable years arrayed.

And yet, to her, benignant stars may bring,
What fate denies to man,—a second spring.

When I may read of tilts in days of old.

And tournaments graced by Chieftains of renown,
Fair dames, grave citizens, and warriors bold,

If fancy would portray some stately town,
Which for such pomp fit theatre should be,
Fair Bruges, I shall then remember thee.'

In this city are many vestiges of the splendour of the Burgundian Dukedom, and the long black mantle universally worn by the females is probably a remnant of the old Spanish connection, which, if I do not much deceive myself, is traceable in the grave deportment of its inhabitants. Bruges is comparatively little disturbed by that curious contest, or rather conflict, of Flemish with French propensities in matters of taste, so conspicuous through other parts of Flanders. The hotel to which we drove at Ghent furnished an odd instance. In the passages were paintings and statues, after the antique, of Hebe and Apollo; and in the garden, a little pond, about a yard and a half in diameter, with a weeping willow bending over it, and under the shade of that tree, in the centre of the pond, a wooden painted statue of a Dutch or Flemish boor, looking ineffably tender upon his mistress, and embracing her. A living duck, tethered at the feet of the sculptured lovers, alternately tormented a miserable eel and itself

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with endeavours to escape from its bonds and prison. Had we chanced to espy the hostess of the hotel in this quaint rural retreat, the exhibition would have been complete. She was a true Flemish figure, in the dress of the days of Holbein; her symbol of office, a weighty bunch of keys, pendent from her portly waist. In Brussels, the modern taste in costume, architecture, &c. has got the mastery; in Ghent there is a struggle: but in Bruges old images are still paramount, and an air of monastic life among the quiet goings-on of a thinly-peopled city is inexpressibly soothing; a pensive grace seems to be cast over all, even the very children.—*Extract from Journal.*—W.

Page 266.

'Where unremitting frosts the rocky crescent bleach,'] 'Let a wall of rocks be imagined from three to six hundred feet in height, and rising between France and Spain, so as physically to separate the two kingdoms—let us fancy this wall curved like a crescent, with its convexity towards France. Lastly, let us suppose, that in the very middle of the wall, a breach of 300 feet wide has been beaten down by the famous *Roland*, and we may have a good idea of what the mountaineers call the "BRECHE DE ROLAND."—*Raymond's Pyrenees.*—W.

Page 266.

'Miserere Domine.'] See the beautiful Song in Mr. Coleridge's Tragedy, 'The Remorse.' Why is the harp of Quantock silent?—W.

Page 266.

'Not, like his great Compeers, indignantly Doth Danube spring to life!'] Before this quarter of the Black Forest was inhabited, the source of the Danube might have suggested some of those sublime images which Armstrong has so finely described; at present, the contrast is most striking. The Spring appears in a capacious stone Basin in front of a Ducal palace, with a pleasure-ground opposite; then, passing under the pavement, takes the form of a little, clear, bright, black, vigorous rill, barely wide enough to tempt the agility of a child five years old to leap over it,—and entering the garden, it joins, after a course of a few hundred yards, a stream much more considerable than itself. The copiousness of the spring at *Doneschingen* must have procured for it the honour of being named the Source of the Danube.—W.

ON APPROACHING THE STAUB-BACH

Page 266.

'The Staub-bach' is a narrow Stream, which, after a long course on the heights, comes to the sharp edge of a somewhat overhanging precipice, overleaps it with a bound, and, after a fall of 930 feet, forms again a rivulet. The vocal powers of these musical Beggars may seem to be exaggerated; but this wild and savage air was utterly unlike any sounds I had ever heard; the notes reached me from a distance, and on what occasion they were sung I could not guess, only they seemed to belong, in some way or other, to the Waterfall—and reminded me of religious services chanted to Streams and Fountains in Pagan times. Mr. Southey has thus accurately characterised the peculiarity of this music: 'While we were at the Waterfall, some half-score peasants, chiefly women and girls, assembled just out of reach of the Spring, and set up—surely, the wildest chorus that ever was heard by human ears,—a song not of articulate

sounds, but in which the voice was used as a mere instrument of music, more flexible than any which art could produce,—sweet, powerful, and thrilling beyond description.'—See Notes to 'A Tale of Paraguay.'—W.

ENGELBERG

Page 268.

The Convent whose site was pointed out, according to tradition, in this manner, is seated at its base. The architecture of the building is unimpressive, but the situation is worthy of the honour which the imagination of the mountaineers has conferred upon it.—W.

Page 271.

'Thou' searching damps and many an envious
flaw
Have marred this Work;']

This picture of the Last Supper has not only been grievously injured by time, but the greatest part of it, if not the whole, is said to have been retouched, or painted over again. These niceties may be left to connoisseurs,—I speak of it as I felt. The copy exhibited in London some years ago, and the engraving by Morghen, are both admirable; but in the original is a power which neither of those works has attained, or even approached.—W.

Page 272.

'Of Figures human and divine.'] The Statues ranged round the spire and along the roof of the Cathedral of Milan, have been found fault with by persons whose exclusive taste is unfortunate for themselves. It is true that the same expense and labour, judiciously directed to purposes more strictly architectural, might have much heightened the general effect of the building; for, seen from the ground, the Statues appear diminutive. But the *coup d'œil*, from the best point of view, which is half way up the spire, must strike an unprejudiced person with admiration; and surely the selection and arrangement of the Figures is exquisitely fitted to support the religion of the country in the imaginations and feelings of the spectator. It was with great pleasure that I saw, during the two ascents which we made, several children, of different ages, tripping up and down the slender spire, and pausing to look around them, with feelings much more animated than could have been derived from these or the finest works of art, if placed within easy reach.—Remember also that you have the Alps on one side, and on the other the Apennines, with the plain of Lombardy between!—W.

Page 274.

'Still, with those white-robed Shapes, a living
Stream,
The glacier Pillars join in solemn guise.']

This Procession is a part of the sacramental service performed once a month. In the valley of Engelberg we had the good fortune to be present at the *Grand Festival of the Virgin*—but the Procession on that day, though consisting of upwards of 1,000 persons, assembled from all the branches of the sequestered valley, was much less striking (notwithstanding the sublimity of the surrounding scenery): it wanted both the simplicity of the other and the accompaniment of the Glacier-columns, whose sisterly resemblance to the *moving Figures* gave it a most beautiful and solemn peculiarity.—W.

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ON BEING STRANDED, &c.

Page 276.

Near the town of Boulogne, and overhanging the beach, are the remains of a tower which bears the name of Caligula, who here terminated his western expedition, of which these sea-shells were the boasted spoils. And at no great distance from these ruins, Buonaparte, standing upon a mound of earth, harangued his 'Army of England,' reminding them of the exploits of Cæsar, and pointing towards the white cliffs, upon which their standards were to float. He recommended also a subscription to be raised among the soldiery to erect on that ground, in memory of the foundation of the 'Legion of Honour,' a Column—which was not completed at the time we were there.—W.

Page 276.

'We mark majestic herds of cattle, free
To ruminate.']

This is a most grateful sight for an Englishman returning to his native land. Everywhere one misses in the cultivated grounds abroad, the animated and soothing accompaniment of animals ranging and selecting their own food at will.—W.

Page 277.

'Far as St. Maurice, from von eastern Forks.']
LES FOURCHES, the point at which the two chains of mountains part, that inclose the Valais, which terminates at ST. MAURICE.—W.

Page 277.

'—ye that occupy
Your council-seats beneath the open sky,
On Sarnen's Mount.']

Sarnen, one of the two capitals of the Canton of Unterwalden; the spot here alluded to is close to the town, and is called the Landenberg, from the tyrant of that name, whose château formerly stood there. On the 1st of January, 1308, the great day which the confederated Heroes had chosen for the deliverance of their country, all the castles of the Governors were taken by force or stratagem; and the Tyrants themselves conducted, with their creatures, to the frontiers, after having witnessed the destruction of their strongholds. From that time the Landenberg has been the place where the Legislators of this division of the Canton assemble. The site, which is well described by Ebel, is one of the most beautiful in Switzerland.—W.

Page 277.

'Calls me to pace her honoured Bridge.—'] The bridges of Lucerne are roofed, and open at the sides, so that the passenger has, at the same time, the benefit of shade and a view of the magnificent country. The pictures are attached to the rafters; those from Scripture History, on the Cathedral Bridge, amount, according to my notes, to 240. Subjects from the Old Testament face the passenger as he goes towards the Cathedral, and those from the New as he returns. The pictures on these bridges, as well as those in most other parts of Switzerland, are not to be spoken of as works of art; but they are instruments admirably answering the purpose for which they were designed.—W.

Page 279, ll. 76, 77.

'—although 'tis fair,
'Twill be another Yarrow.']

These words were quoted to me from 'Yarrow Unvisited,' by Sir Walter Scott, when I visited him

at Abbotsford, a day or two before his departure for Italy: and the affecting condition in which he was when he looked upon Rome from the Janiculum Mount, was reported to me by a lady who had the honour of conducting him thither.—W.

Page 281, l. 241.

'His sepulchral verse.'] If any English reader should be desirous of knowing how far I am justified in thus describing the epitaphs of Chiabrera, he will find translated specimens of them on pp. 448-451, under the head of 'Epitaphs and Elegiac Pieces.'—W.

Page 283.

'This flowering broom's dear neighbourhood.'] In the course of this continental tour of 1837, Wordsworth was deeply impressed with the splendour and profusion of the flowering broom in the valleys and the more sheltered heights of the Apennines; and reluctantly owned the inferiority of the English to the French variety in respect of both beauty and fragrance. The note upon the Oxford movement which follows (and which should properly be read at the conclusion of this poem) was written, at the request of the poet, by his friend Frederick Faber.—ED.

It would be ungenerous not to advert to the religious movement that, since the composition of these verses in 1837, has made itself felt, more or less strongly, throughout the English Church;—a movement that takes, for its first principle, a devout deference to the voice of Christian antiquity. It is not my office to pass judgment on questions of theological detail; but my own repugnance to the spirit and system of Romanism has been so repeatedly and, I trust, feelingly expressed, that I shall not be suspected of a leaning that way, if I do not join in the grave charge, thrown out in the heat of controversy, against the learned and pious men to whose labours I allude. I speak apart from controversy; but, with strong faith in the moral temper which would elevate the present by doing reverence to the past, I would draw cheerful auguries for the English Church from this movement, as likely to restore among us a tone of piety more earnest and real than that produced by the mere formalities of the understanding, refusing, in a degree which I cannot but lament, that its own temper and judgment shall be controlled by those of antiquity.—W.

THE PINE OF MONTE MARIO

Page 283.

Within a couple of hours of my arrival at Rome, I saw from Monte Pincio, the Pine-tree as described in the sonnet; and, while expressing admiration at the beauty of its appearance, I was told by an acquaintance of my fellow-traveller, who happened to join us at the moment, that a price had been paid for it by the late Sir G. Beaumont, upon condition that the proprietor should not act upon his known intention of cutting it down.—W.

CAMALDOLI

Page 287.

This famous sanctuary was the original establishment of Saint Romualdo (or Rumwald, as our ancestors saxonised the name), in the 11th century, the ground (campo) being given by a Count Maldo. The Camaldolensi, however, have spread wide as a branch of Benedictines, and may therefore be classed among the gentlemen of the monastic

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orders. The society comprehends two orders, monks and hermits; symbolised by their arms, two doves drinking out of the same cup. The monastery in which the monks here reside is beautifully situated, but a large unattractive edifice, not unlike a factory. The hermitage is placed in a loftier and wilder region of the forest. It comprehends between twenty and thirty distinct residences, each including for its single hermit an inclosed piece of ground and three very small apartments. There are days of indulgence when the hermit may quit his cell, and when old age arrives, he descends from the mountain and takes his abode among the monks.

My companion had in the year 1831 fallen in with the monk, the subject of these two sonnets, who showed him his abode among the hermits. It is from him that I received the following particulars. He was then about forty years of age, but his appearance was that of an older man. He had been a painter by profession, but on taking orders changed his name from Santi to Raffaello, perhaps with an unconscious reference as well to the great Sanzio d'Urbino as to the archangel. He assured my friend that he had been thirteen years in the hermitage and had never known melancholy or ennui. In the little recess for study and prayer, there was a small collection of books. 'I read only,' said he, 'books of asceticism and mystical theology.' On being asked the names of the most famous mystics, he enumerated Scaramelli, *San Giovanni della Croce*, *Saint Dionysius the Areopagite* (supposing the work which bears his name to be really his), and with peculiar emphasis *Ricardo di San Vittori*. The works of *Saint Theresa* are also in high repute among ascetics. These names may interest some of my readers.

We heard that Raffaello was then living in the convent; my friend sought in vain to renew his acquaintance with him. It was probably a day of seclusion. The reader will perceive that these sonnets were supposed to be written when he was a young man.—W.

Page 287.

'What aim had they, the Pair of Monks.'] In justice to the Benedictines of Camaldoli, by whom strangers are so hospitably entertained, I feel obliged to notice that I saw among them no other figures at all resembling, in size and complexion, the two Monks described in this Sonnet. What was their office, or the motive which brought them to this place of mortification, which they could not have approached without being carried in this or some other way, a feeling of delicacy prevented me from enquiring. An account has before been given of the hermitage they were about to enter. It was visited by us towards the end of the month of May; yet snow was lying thick under the pine-trees, within a few yards of the gate.—W.

AT VALLOMBROSA

Page 287.

The name of Milton is pleasingly connected with Vallombrosa in many ways. The pride with which the Monk, without any previous question from me, pointed out his residence, I shall not readily forget. It may be proper here to defend the Poet from a charge which has been brought against him, in respect to the passage in 'Paradise Lost,' where this place is mentioned. It is said, that he has erred in speaking of the trees there being deciduous, whereas they are, in fact, pines. The fault-finders are themselves mistaken; the *natural* woods of the

region of Vallombrosa are deciduous, and spread to a great extent; those near the convent are, indeed, mostly pines; but they are avenues of trees planted within a few steps of each other, and thus composing large tracts of wood; plots of which are periodically cut down. The appearance of those narrow avenues, upon steep slopes open to the sky, on account of the height which the trees attain by being forced to grow upwards, is often very impressive. My guide, a boy of about fourteen years old, pointed this out to me in several places.—W.

Page 290, ll. 46, 47.

—'more high, the Dacian force,
To hoof and finger mailed;']

Here and infra, see Forsyth.—W.

THE RIVER DUDDON

Page 296.

A Poet¹ whose works are not yet known as they deserve to be thus enters upon his description of the 'Ruins of Rome:'

'The rising Sun
Flames on the ruins in the purer air
Towering aloft;'

and ends thus—

'The setting Sun displays
His visible great round, between yon towers,
As through two shady cliffs.'

Mr. Crowe, in his excellent loco-descriptive Poem, 'Lewesdon Hill,' is still more expeditious, finishing the whole on a May-morning, before breakfast.

'To-morrow for severer thought, but now
To breakfast, and keep festival to-day.'

No one believes, or is desired to believe, that those Poems were actually composed within such limits of time; nor was there any reason why a prose statement should acquaint the Reader with the plain fact, to the disturbance of poetic credibility. But, in the present case, I am compelled to mention, that the above series of Sonnets was the growth of many years;—the one which stands the 14th was the first produced; and others were added upon occasional visits to the Stream, or as recollections of the scenes upon its banks awakened a wish to describe them. In this manner I had proceeded insensibly, without perceiving that I was trespassing upon ground preoccupied, at least as far as intention went, by Mr. Coleridge; who, more than twenty years ago, used to speak of writing a rural Poem, to be entitled 'The Brook,' of which he has given a sketch in a recent publication. But a particular subject, cannot, I think, much interfere with a general one; and I have been further kept from encroaching upon any right Mr. C. may still wish to exercise, by the restriction which the frame of the Sonnet imposed upon me, narrowing unavoidably the range of thought, and precluding, though not without its advantages, many graces to which a freer movement of verse would naturally have led.

May I not venture, then, to hope, that, instead of being a hindrance, by anticipation of any part of the subject, these Sonnets may remind Mr.

¹ I.e. the Welshman John Dyer (1699-1758), author of *Gronnar Hill* (1726), a kind of descriptive ode in octosyllabic verse, and of the two didactic poems in Miltonic blank verse, entitled, *The Ruins of Rome* (1740) and *The Fleece* (1757). *Lewesdon Hill*, by the Rev. William Crowe, went through three editions between 1788 and 1804.—Ed.

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Coleridge of his own more comprehensive design, and induce him to fulfil it?—There is a sympathy in streams,—one calleth to another; and I would gladly believe, that 'The Brook' will, ere long, murmur in concert with 'The Duddon.' But, asking pardon for this fancy, I need not scruple to say, that those verses must indeed be ill-fated which can enter upon such pleasant walks of nature, without receiving and giving inspiration. The power of waters over the minds of Poets has been acknowledged from the earliest ages;—through the 'Flumina amem sylvasque inglorius' of Virgil, down to the sublime apostrophe to the great rivers of the earth, by Armstrong, and the simple ejaculation of Burns (chosen, if I recollect right, by Mr. Coleridge, as a motto for his embryo 'Brook'):

'The Muse nae Poet eaver fand her,
Till by himsel' he learn'd to wander,
Adown some trotting burn's meander,
AND NA' THINK LANG.'—W.

SONNET VI

Page 298.

'There bloomed the strawberry of the wilderness;
The trembling eyebright showed her sapphire blue.'

These two lines are in a great measure taken from 'The Beauties of Spring, a Juvenile Poem,' by the Rev. Joseph Symson. He was a native of Cumberland, and was educated in the vale of Grasmere, and at Hawkshead school: his poems are little known, but they contain passages of splendid description; and the versification of his 'Vision of Alfred' is harmonious and animated. In describing the motions of the Sylphs, that constitute the strange machinery of his Poem, he uses the following illustrative simile—

—'Glancing from their plumes
A changeful light the azure vault illumines.
Less varying hues beneath the Pole adorn
The streamy glories of the Boreal morn,
That wavering to and fro their radiance shed
On Bothnia's gulf with glassy ice o'erspread,
Where the lone native, as he homeward glides,
On polished sandals o'er the imprisoned tides,
And still the balance of his frame preserves,
Wheeled on alternate foot in lengthening curves,
Sees at a glance, above him and below,
Two rival heavens with equal splendour glow.
Sphered in the centre of the world he seems;
For all around with soft effulgence gleams;
Stars, moons, and meteors, ray opposed to ray,
And solemn midnight pours the blaze of day.'

He was a man of ardent feeling, and his faculties of mind, particularly his memory, were extraordinary. Brief notices of his life ought to find a place in the History of Westmoreland.—W.

SONNETS XVII AND XVIII

Page 300.

The EAGLE requires a large domain for its support: but several pairs, not many years ago, were constantly resident in this country, building their nests in the steepes of Borrowdale, Wastdale, Ennerdale, and on the eastern side of Helvellyn. Often have I heard anglers speak of the grandeur of their appearance, as they hovered over Red Tarn, in one of the coves of this mountain. The bird frequently returns, but is always destroyed. Not long since, one visited Rydal lake, and remained some hours near its banks: the consternation which it occasioned among the different species of fowl, particularly the herons, was expressed by

loud screams. The horse also is naturally afraid of the eagle.—There were several Roman stations among these mountains; the most considerable seems to have been in a meadow at the head of Windermere, established, undoubtedly, as a check over the Passes of Kirkstone, Dunmail-raise, and of Hardknott and Wrynose. On the margin of Rydal lake, a coin of Trajan was discovered very lately.—The ROMAN FORT here alluded to, called by the country people 'Hardknott Castle,' is most impressively situated half-way down the hill on the right of the road that descends from Hardknott into Eskdale. It has escaped the notice of most antiquarians, and is but slightly mentioned by Lysons. The DRUIDICAL CIRCLE is about half a mile to the left of the road ascending Stone-side from the vale of Duddon: the country people call it *Sunken Church*.

The reader who may have been interested in the foregoing Sonnets (which together may be considered as a Poem), will not be displeased to find in this place a prose account of the Duddon, extracted from Green's comprehensive 'Guide to the Lakes,' lately published. 'The road leading from Conistown to Broughton is over high ground, and commands a view of the river Duddon; which, at high water, is a grand sight, having the beautiful and fertile lands of Lancashire and Cumberland stretching each way from its margin. In this extensive view, the face of nature is displayed in a wonderful variety of hill and dale; wooded grounds and buildings; amongst the latter Broughton Tower, seated on the crown of a hill, rising elegantly from the valley, is an object of extraordinary interest. Fertility on each side is gradually diminished, and lost in the superior heights of Blackcomb, in Cumberland, and the high lands between Kirkby and Ulverstone.'

'The road from Broughton to Seathwaite is on the banks of the Duddon, and on its Lancashire side it is of various elevations. The river is an amusing companion, one while brawling and tumbling over rocky precipices, until the agitated water becomes again calm by arriving at a smoother and less precipitous bed, but its course is soon again ruffled, and the current thrown into every variety of foam which the rocky channel of a river can give to water.'—*Vide Green's Guide to the Lakes*, vol. i, pp. 98–100.

After all, the traveller would be most gratified who should approach this beautiful Stream, neither at its source, as is done in the Sonnets, nor from its termination; but from Conistown over Walna Scar; first descending into a little circular valley, a collateral compartment of the long winding vale through which flows the Duddon. This recess, towards the close of September, when the after-grass of the meadows is still of a fresh green, with the leaves of many of the trees faded, but perhaps none fallen, is truly enchanting. At a point elevated enough to show the various objects in the valley, and not so high as to diminish their importance, the stranger will instinctively halt. On the foreground, a little below the most favourable station, a rude foot-bridge is thrown over the bed of the noisy brook foaming by the way-side. Rustet and craggy hills, of bold and varied outline, surround the level valley, which is besprinkled with grey rocks plumed with birch trees. A few home-steads are interspersed, in some places peeping out from among the rocks like hermitages, whose site has been chosen for the benefit of sunshine as well as shelter; in other instances, the dwelling-house, barn, and byre, compose together a cruciform structure, which, with its embowering trees, and

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the ivy clothing part of the walls and roof like a fleece, call to mind the remains of an ancient abbey. Time, in most cases, and nature everywhere, have given a sanctity to the humble works of man, that are scattered over this peaceful retirement. Hence a harmony of tone and colour, a consummation and perfection of beauty, which would have been marred had aim or purpose interfered with the course of convenience, utility, or necessity. This unvisited region stands in no need of the veil of twilight to soften or disguise its features. As it glistens in the morning sunshine, it would fill the spectator's heart with gladness. Looking from our chosen station, he would feel an impatience to rove among its pathways, to be greeted by the milkmaid, to wander from house to house, exchanging 'good-morrows' as he passed the open doors; but, at evening, when the sun is set, and a pearly light gleams from the western quarter of the sky, with an answering light from the smooth surface of the meadows; when the trees are dusky, but each kind still distinguishable; when the cool air has condensed the blue smoke rising from the cottage chimneys; when the dark mossy stones seem to sleep in the bed of the foaming brook; then, he would be unwilling to move forward, not less from a reluctance to relinquish what he beholds, than from an apprehension of disturbing, by his approach, the quietness beneath him. Issuing from the plain of this valley, the brook descends in a rapid torrent passing by the churchyard of Seathwaite. The traveller is thus conducted at once into the midst of the wild and beautiful scenery which gave occasion to the Sonnets from the 14th to the 20th inclusive. From the point where the Seathwaite brook joins the Duddon, is a view upwards, into the pass through which the river makes its way into the plain of Donnerdale. The perpendicular rock on the right bears the ancient British name of THE PEN; the one opposite is called WALLA-BARROW CRAG, a name that occurs in other places to designate rocks of the same character. The chaotic aspect of the scene is well marked by the expression of a stranger, who strolled out while dinner was preparing, and at his return, being asked by his host, 'What way he had been wandering?' replied, 'As far as it is finished!'

The bed of the Duddon is here strewn with large fragments of rocks fallen from aloft; which, as Mr. Green truly says, 'are happily adapted to the many-shaped waterfalls' (or rather water-breaks, for none of them are high), 'displayed in the short space of half a mile.' That there is some hazard in frequenting these desolate places, I myself have had proof; for one night an immense mass of rock fell upon the very spot where, with a friend, I had lingered the day before. 'The concussion,' says Mr. Green, speaking of the event (for he also, in the practice of his art, on that day sat exposed for a still longer time to the same peril), 'was heard, not without alarm, by the neighbouring shepherds.' But to return to Seathwaite Churchyard: it contains the following inscription:—

'In memory of the Reverend Robert Walker, who died the 25th of June, 1802, in the 93d year of his age, and 67th of his curacy at Seathwaite.
'Also, of Anne his wife, who died the 28th of January, in the 93d year of her age.'

In the parish register of Seathwaite Chapel, is this notice:

'Buried, June 28th, the Rev. Robert Walker. He was curate of Seathwaite sixty-six years. He was a

man singular for his temperance, industry, and integrity.'

This individual is the Pastor alluded to, in the eighteenth Sonnet, as a worthy compeer of the country parson of Chaucer, &c. In the Seventh Book of the Excursion, an abstract of his character is given, beginning—

'A Priest abides before whose life such doubts
Fall to the ground;—'

and some account of his life, for it is worthy of being recorded, will not be out of place here.

MEMOIR OF THE REV. ROBERT WALKER

In the year 1709, Robert Walker was born at Under-crag, in Seathwaite; he was the youngest of twelve children. His eldest brother, who inherited the small family estate, died at Under-crag, aged ninety-four, being twenty-four years older than the subject of this Memoir, who was born of the same mother. Robert was a sickly infant; and, through his boyhood and youth, continuing to be of delicate frame and tender health, it was deemed best, according to the country phrase, to *breed him a scholar*; for it was not likely that he would be able to earn a livelihood by bodily labour. At that period few of these dales were furnished with school-houses; the children being taught to read and write in the chapel; and in the same consecrated building, where he officiated for so many years both as preacher and schoolmaster, he himself received the rudiments of his education. In his youth he became schoolmaster at Loweswater; not being called upon, probably, in that situation to teach more than reading, writing, and arithmetic. But, by the assistance of a 'Gentleman,' in the neighbourhood, he acquired, at leisure hours, a knowledge of the classics, and became qualified for taking holy orders. Upon his ordination, he had the offer of two curacies: the one, Torver, in the vale of Coniston,—the other, Seathwaite, in his native vale. The value of each was the same, viz. five pounds *per annum*: but the cure of Seathwaite having a cottage attached to it, as he wished to marry, he chose it in preference. The young person on whom his affections were fixed, though in the condition of a domestic servant, had given promise, by her serious and modest deportment, and by her virtuous dispositions, that she was worthy to become the helpmate of a man entering upon a plan of life such as he had marked out for himself. By her frugality she had stored up a small sum of money, with which they began housekeeping. In 1735 or 1736, he entered upon his curacy; and, nineteen years afterwards, his situation is thus described, in some letters to be found in the Annual Register for 1760, from which the following is extracted:

To Mr. —.

'CONISTON, July 26, 1754.

'Sir,

'I was the other day upon a party of pleasure, about five or six miles from this place, where I met with a very striking object, and of a nature not very common. Going into a clergyman's house (of whom I had frequently heard), I found him sitting at the head of a long square table, such as is commonly used in this country by the lower class of people, dressed in a coarse blue frock, trimmed with black horn buttons; a checked shirt, a leather strap about his neck for a stock, a coarse apron, and a pair of great wooden-soled shoes plated with iron to preserve them (what we call clogs in these

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parts), with a child upon his knee, eating his breakfast; his wife, and the remainder of his children, were some of them employed in waiting upon each other, the rest in teasing and spinning wool, at which trade he is a great proficient; and moreover, when it is made ready for sale, will lay it, by sixteen or thirty two pounds' weight, upon his back, and on foot, seven or eight miles, will carry it to the market, even in the depth of winter. I was not much surprised at all this, as you may possibly be, having heard a great deal of it related before. But I must confess myself astonished with the alacrity and the good humour that appeared both in the clergyman and his wife, and more so at the sense and ingenuity of the clergyman himself.' . . .

Then follows a letter from another person, dated 1755, from which an extract shall be given.

'By his frugality and good management, he keeps the wolf from the door, as we say; and if he advances a little in the world, it is owing more to his own care, than to anything else he has to rely upon. I don't find his inclination is running after further preferment. He is settled among the people, that are happy among themselves; and lives in the greatest unanimity and friendship with them; and, I believe, the minister and people are exceedingly satisfied with each other; and indeed how should they be dissatisfied when they have a person of so much worth and probity for their pastor? A man who, for his candour and meekness, his sober, chaste, and virtuous conversation, his soundness in principle and practice, is an ornament to his profession, and an honour to the country he is in; and bear with me if I say, the plainness of his dress, the sanctity of his manners, the simplicity of his doctrine, and the vehemence of his expression, have a sort of resemblance to the pure practice of primitive Christianity.'

We will now give his own account of himself, to be found in the same place.

FROM THE REV. ROBERT WALKER

'SIR,—Yours of the 26th instant was communicated to me by Mr. C—, and I should have returned an immediate answer, but the hand of Providence, then laying heavy upon an amiable pledge of conjugal endearment, hath since taken from me a promising girl, which the disconsolate mother too pensively laments the loss of; though we have yet eight living, all healthful, hopeful children, whose names and ages are as follows:—Zaccheus, aged almost eighteen years; Elizabeth, sixteen years and ten months; Mary, fifteen; Moses, thirteen years and three months; Sarah, ten years and three months; Mabel, eight years and three months; William Tyson, three years and eight months; and Anne Esther, one year and three months; besides Anne, who died two years and six months ago, and was then aged between nine and ten; and Eleanor, who died the 23rd inst., January, aged six years and ten months. Zaccheus, the eldest child, is now learning the trade of tanner, and has two years and a half of his apprenticeship to serve. The annual income of my chapel at present, as near as I can compute it, may amount to about £17, of which is paid in cash, viz. £5 from the bounty of Queen Anne, and £5 from W. P., Esq., of P—, out of the annual rents, he being lord of the manor, and £3 from the several inhabitants of L—, settled upon the tenements as a rent-charge; the house and gardens I value at £4 yearly, and not worth more; and I believe the surplice fees and voluntary contributions, one year with another, may be worth £3; but as the inhabitants are few in number, and the fees very low,

this last-mentioned sum consists merely in free-will offerings.

'I am situated greatly to my satisfaction with regard to the conduct and behaviour of my auditory, who not only live in the happy ignorance of the follies and vices of the age, but in mutual peace and goodwill with one another, and are seemingly (I hope really too) sincere Christians, and sound members of the established church, not one dissenter of any denomination being amongst them all. I got to the value of £40 for my wife's fortune, but had no real estate of my own, being the youngest son of twelve children, born of obscure parents; and, though my income has been but small, and my family large, yet, by a providential blessing upon my own diligent endeavours, the kindness of friends, and a cheap country to live in, we have always had the necessaries of life. By what I have written (which is a true and exact account, to the best of my knowledge,) I hope you will not think your favour to me, out of the late worthy Dr. Stratford's effects, quite misbestowed, for which I must ever gratefully own myself,

'SIR,

'Your much obliged and most obedient
humble Servant,

'R. W., Curate of S—.

'To Mr. C., of Lancaster.'

About the time when this letter was written, the Bishop of Chester recommended the scheme of joining the curacy of Ulpha to the contiguous one of Seathwaite, and the nomination was offered to Mr. Walker; but an unexpected difficulty arising, Mr. W., in a letter to the Bishop, (a copy of which, in his own beautiful handwriting, now lies before me,) thus expresses himself. 'If he,' meaning the person in whom the difficulty originated, 'had suggested any such objection before, I should utterly have declined any attempt to the curacy of Ulpha: indeed, I was always apprehensive it might be disagreeable to my auditory at Seathwaite, as they have been always accustomed to double duty, and the inhabitants of Ulpha despair of being able to support a schoolmaster who is not curate there also; which suppressed all thoughts in me of serving them both.' And in a second letter to the Bishop he writes:—

'MY LORD,—I have the favour of yours of the 1st instant, and am exceedingly obliged on account of the Ulpha affair: if that curacy should lapse into your Lordship's hands, I would beg leave rather to decline than embrace it; for the chapels of Seathwaite and Ulpha, annexed together, would be apt to cause a general discontent among the inhabitants of both places; by either thinking themselves slighted, being only served alternately, or neglected in the duty, or attributing it to covetousness in me; all which occasions of murmuring I would willingly avoid.' And in concluding his former letter, he expresses a similar sentiment upon the same occasion, 'desiring, if it be possible, however, as much as in me lieth, to live peaceably with all men.'

The year following, the curacy of Seathwaite was again augmented; and, to effect this augmentation, fifty pounds had been advanced by himself; and, in 1760, lands were purchased with eight hundred pounds. Scanty as was his income, the frequent offer of much better benefices could not tempt Mr. W. to quit a situation where he had been so long happy, with a consciousness of being useful. Among his papers I find the following copy of a letter, dated 1775, twenty years after his refusal

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of the curacy of Ulpha, which will show what exertions had been made for one of his sons.

'MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE,

'Our remote situation here makes it difficult to get the necessary information for transacting business regularly; such is the reason of my giving your Grace the present trouble.

'The bearer (my son) is desirous of offering himself candidate for deacon's orders at your Grace's ensuing ordination; the first, on the 25th instant, so that his papers could not be transmitted in due time. As he is now fully at age, and I have afforded him education to the utmost of my ability, it would give me great satisfaction (if your Grace would take him, and find him qualified) to have him ordained. His constitution has been tender for some years; he entered the college of Dublin, but his health would not permit him to continue there, or I would have supported him much longer. He has been with me at home above a year, in which time he has gained great strength of body, sufficient, I hope, to enable him for performing the function. Divine Providence, assisted by liberal benefactors, has blessed my endeavours, from a small income, to rear a numerous family; and as my time of life renders me now unfit for much future expectancy from this world, I should be glad to see my son settled in a promising way to acquire an honest livelihood for himself. His behaviour, so far in life, has been irreproachable; and I hope he will not degenerate, in principles or practice, from the precepts and pattern of an indulgent parent. Your Grace's favourable reception of this, from a distant corner of the diocese, and an obscure hand, will excite filial gratitude, and a due use shall be made of the obligation vouchsafed thereby to

'Your Grace's very dutiful and most obedient

'Son and Servant,

'ROBERT WALKER.'

The same man, who was thus liberal in the education of his numerous family, was even munificent in hospitality as a parish priest. Every Sunday, were served, upon the long table, at which he has been described sitting with a child upon his knee, messes of broth, for the refreshment of those of his congregation who came from a distance, and usually took their seats as parts of his own household. It seems scarcely possible that this custom could have commenced before the augmentation of his cure; and what would to many have been a high price of self-denial, was paid, by the pastor and his family, for this gratification; as the treat could only be provided by dressing at one time the whole, perhaps, of their weekly allowance of fresh animal food; consequently, for a succession of days, the table was covered with cold victuals only. His generosity in old age may be still further illustrated by a little circumstance relating to an orphan grandson, then ten years of age, which I find in a copy of a letter to one of his sons; he requests that half a guinea may be left for little Robert's pocket money, 'who was then at school: intrusting it to the care of a lady, who, as he says, 'may sometimes frustrate his squandering it away foolishly,' and promising to send him an equal allowance annually for the same purpose. The conclusion of the same letter is so characteristic, that I cannot forbear to transcribe it. 'We,' meaning his wife and himself, 'are in our wonted state of health, allowing for the hasty strides of old age knocking daily at our door, and threateningly telling us, we are not only mortal,

but must expect ere long to take our leave of our ancient cottage, and lie down in our last dormitory. Pray pardon my neglect to answer yours: let us hear sooner from you, to augment the mirth of the Christmas holidays. Wishing you all the pleasures of the approaching season, I am, dear Son, with lasting sincerity, yours affectionately,

'ROBERT WALKER.'

He loved old customs and old usages, and in some instances stuck to them to his own loss; for, having had a sum of money lodged in the hands of a neighbouring tradesman, when long course of time had raised the rate of interest, and more was offered, he refused to accept it; an act not difficult to one, who, while he was drawing seventeen pounds a year from his curacy, declined, as we have seen, to add the profits of another small benefice to his own, lest he should be suspected of cupidity.—From this vice he was utterly free; he made no charge for teaching school; such as could afford to pay, gave him what they pleased. When very young, having kept a diary of his expenses, however trifling, the large amount at the end of the year surprised him; and from that time the rule of his life was to be economical, not avaricious. At his decease he left behind him no less a sum than £2,000; and such a sense of his various excellences was prevalent in the country, that the epithet of WONDERFUL is to this day attached to his name.

There is in the above sketch something so extraordinary as to require further explanatory details.—And to begin with his industry: eight hours in each day, during five days in the week, and half of Saturday, except when the labours of husbandry were urgent, he was occupied in teaching. His seat was within the rails of the altar; the communion table was his desk; and, like Shenstone's schoolmistress, the master employed himself at the spinning-wheel, while the children were repeating their lessons by his side. Every evening, after school hours, if not more profitably engaged, he continued the same kind of labour, exchanging, for the benefit of exercise, the small wheel at which he had sat, for the large one on which wool is spun, the spinner stepping to and fro. Thus, was the wheel constantly in readiness to prevent the waste of a moment's time. Nor was his industry with the pen, when occasion called for it, less eager. Intrusted with extensive management of public and private affairs, he acted, in his rustic neighbourhood, as scrivener, writing out petitions, deeds of conveyance, wills, covenants, &c., with pecuniary gain to himself, and to the great benefit of his employers. These labours (at all times considerable) at one period of the year, viz. between Christmas and Candlemas, when money transactions are settled in this country, were often so intense, that he passed great part of the night, and sometimes whole nights, at his desk. His garden also was tilled by his own hand; he had a right of pasturage upon the mountains for a few sheep and a couple of cows, which required his attendance; with this pastoral occupation he joined the labours of husbandry upon a small scale, renting two or three acres in addition to his own less than one acre of glebe; and the humblest drudgery which the cultivation of these fields required was performed by himself.

He also assisted his neighbours in haymaking and shearing their flocks, and in the performance of this latter service he was eminently dexterous. They, in their turn, complimented him with the present of a haycock, or a fleece; less as a recom-

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pense for this particular service than as a general acknowledgment. The Sabbath was in a strict sense kept holy; the Sunday evenings being devoted to reading the Scripture and family prayer. The principal festivals appointed by the Church were also duly observed; but through every other day in the week, through every week in the year he was incessantly occupied in work of hand or mind; not allowing a moment for recreation, except upon a Saturday afternoon, when he indulged himself with a Newspaper, or sometimes with a Magazine. The frugality and temperance established in his house were as admirable as the industry. Nothing to which the name of luxury could be given was there known; in the latter part of his life, indeed, when tea had been brought into almost general use, it was provided for visitors, and for such of his own family as returned occasionally to his roof, and had been accustomed to this refreshment elsewhere; but neither he nor his wife ever partook of it. The raiment worn by his family was comely and decent, but as simple as their diet; the home-spun materials were made up into apparel by their own hands. At the time of the decease of this thrifty pair, their cottage contained a large store of webs of woollen and linen cloth, woven from thread of their own spinning. And it is remarkable that the pew in the chapel in which the family used to sit, remains neatly lined with woollen cloth spun by the pastor's own hands. It is the only pew in the chapel so distinguished; and I know of no other instance of his conformity to the delicate accommodations of modern times. The fuel of the house, like that of their neighbours, consisted of peat, procured from the mosses by their own labour. The lights by which, in the winter evenings, their work was performed, were of their own manufacture, such as still continue to be used in these cottages; they are made of the pith of rushes dipped in any unctuous substance that the house affords. White candles, as tallow candles are here called, were reserved to honour the Christmas festivals, and were perhaps produced upon no other occasions. Once a month, during the proper season, a sheep was drawn from their small mountain flock, and killed for the use of the family; and a cow, towards the close of the year, was salted and dried for winter provision: the hide was tanned to furnish them with shoes.—By these various resources, this venerable clergyman reared a numerous family, not only preserving them, as he affectingly says, 'from wanting the necessities of life,' but affording them an unstinted education, and the means of raising themselves in society. In this they were eminently assisted by the effects of their father's example, his precepts, and injunctions: he was aware that truth-speaking, as a moral virtue, is best secured by inculcating attention to accuracy of report even on trivial occasions; and so rigid were the rules of honesty by which he endeavoured to bring up his family, that if one of them had chanced to find in the lanes or fields anything of the least use or value without being able to ascertain to whom it belonged, he always insisted upon the child's carrying it back to the place from which it had been brought.

No one it might be thought could, as has been described, convert his body into a machine, as it were, of industry for the humblest uses, and keep his thoughts so frequently bent upon secular concerns, without grievous injury to the more precious parts of his nature. How could the powers of intellect thrive, or its graces be displayed, in the midst of circumstances apparently so unfavourable, and where, to the direct cultivation of the mind,

so small a portion of time was allotted? But, in this extraordinary man, things in their nature adverse were reconciled. His conversation was remarkable, not only for being chaste and pure, but for the degree in which it was fervent and eloquent; his written style was correct, simple, and animated. Nor did his *affections* suffer more than his intellect; he was tenderly alive to all the duties of his pastoral office; the poor and needy 'he never sent empty away,'—the stranger was fed and refreshed in passing that unfrequented vale—the sick were visited; and the feelings of humanity found further exercise among the distresses and embarrassments in the worldly estate of his neighbours, with which his talents for business made him acquainted; and the disinterestedness, impartiality, and uprightness which he maintained in the management of all affairs confided to him, were virtues seldom separated in his own conscience from religious obligation. Nor could such conduct fail to remind those who witnessed it of a spirit nobler than law or custom: they felt convictions which, but for such intercourse, could not have been afforded, that, as in the practice of their pastor, there was no guile, so in his faith there was nothing hollow; and we are warranted in believing, that upon these occasions, selfishness, obstinacy, and discord would often give way before the breathings of his good-will and saintly integrity. It may be presumed also—while his humble congregation were listening to the moral precepts which he delivered from the pulpit, and to the Christian exhortations that they should love their neighbours as themselves, and do as they would be done unto—that peculiar efficacy was given to the preacher's labours by recollections in the minds of his congregation, that they were called upon to do no more than his own actions were daily setting before their eyes.

The afternoon service in the chapel was less numerous attended than that of the morning, but by a more serious auditory; the lesson from the New Testament, on those occasions, was accompanied by Burkitt's Commentaries. These lessons he read with impassioned emphasis, frequently drawing tears from his hearers, and leaving a lasting impression upon their minds. His devotional feelings and the powers of his own mind were further exercised, along with those of his family, in perusing the Scriptures: not only on the Sunday evenings, but on every other evening, while the rest of the household were at work, some one of the children, and in her turn the servant, for the sake of practice in reading, or for instruction, read the Bible aloud; and in this manner the whole was repeatedly gone through. That no common importance was attached to the observance of religious ordinances by his family, appears from the following memorandum by one of his descendants, which I am tempted to insert at length, as it is characteristic, and somewhat curious. 'There is a small chapel in the county palatine of Lancaster, where a certain clergyman has regularly officiated above sixty years, and a few months ago administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the same, to a decent number of devout communicants. After the clergyman had received himself, the first company out of the assembly who approached the altar, and kneeled down to be partakers of the sacred elements, consisted of the parson's wife; to whom he had been married upwards of sixty years; one son and his wife; four daughters, each with her husband; whose ages, all added together, amounted to above 714 years. The several and respective distances from the place of each of their

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abodes, to the chapel where they all communicated, will measure more than 1,000 English miles. Though the narration will appear surprising, it is without doubt a fact that the same persons, exactly four years before, met at the same place, and all joined in performance of the same venerable duty.

He was indeed most zealously attached to the doctrine and frame of the Established Church. We have seen him congratulating himself that he had no dissenters in his cure of any denomination. Some allowance must be made for the state of opinion when his first religious impressions were received, before the reader will acquit him of bigotry, when I mention, that at the time of the augmentation of the cure, he refused to invest part of the money in the purchase of an estate offered to him upon advantageous terms, because the proprietor was a Quaker;—whether from scrupulous apprehension that a blessing would not attend a contract framed for the benefit of the church between persons not in religious sympathy with each other; or, as a seeker of peace, he was afraid of the uncomplimentary disposition which at one time was too frequently conspicuous in that sect. Of this an instance had fallen under his own notice; for, while he taught school at Loweswater, certain persons of that denomination had refused to pay annual interest due under the title of Church-stock; a great hardship upon the incumbent, for the curacy of Loweswater was then scarcely less poor than that of Seathwaite. To what degree this prejudice of his was blameable need not be determined;—certain it is, that he was not only desirous, as he himself says, to live in peace, but in love, with all men. He was placable, and charitable in his judgments; and, however correct in conduct and rigorous to himself, he was ever ready to forgive the trespasses of others, and to soften the censure that was cast upon their frailties.—It would be unpardonable to omit that, in the maintenance of his virtues, he received due support from the partner of his long life. She was equally strict, in attending to her share of their joint cares, nor less diligent in her appropriate occupations. A person who had been some time their servant in the latter part of their lives, concluded the panegyric of her mistress by saying to me, 'She was no less excellent than her husband; she was good to the poor; she was good to everything!' He survived for a short time this virtuous companion. When she died, he ordered that her body should be borne to the grave by three of her daughters and one grand-daughter; and, when the corpse was lifted from the threshold, he insisted upon lending his aid, and feeling about, for he was then almost blind, took hold of a napkin fixed to the coffin; and, as a bearer of the body, entered the chapel, a few steps from the lowly parsonage.

What a contrast does the life of this obscurely-seated, and, in point of worldly wealth, poorly-repaid Churchman, present to that of a Cardinal Wolsey!

'O 'tis a burthen, Cromwell, 'tis a burthen
Too heavy for a man who hopes for heaven!'

We have been dwelling upon images of peace in the moral world, that have brought us again to the quiet enclosure of consecrated ground, in which this venerable pair lie interred. The sounding brook, that rolls close by the church-

1 Mr. Walker's charity being of that kind which 'seeketh not her own,' he would rather forego his rights than distract for dues which the parties liable refused, as a point of conscience, to pay.

yard, without disturbing feeling or meditation, is now unfortunately laid bare; but not long ago it participated, with the chapel, the shade of some stately ash-trees, which will not spring again. While the spectator from this spot is looking round upon the girdle of stony mountains that encompasses the vale,—masses of rock, out of which monuments for all men that ever existed might have been hewn—it would surprise him to be told, as with truth he might be, that the plain blue slab dedicated to the memory of this aged pair is a production of a quarry in North Wales. It was sent as a mark of respect by one of their descendants from the vale of Festiniog, a region almost as beautiful as that in which it now lies!

Upon the Seathwaite Brook, at a small distance from the parsonage, has been erected a mill for spinning yarn; it is a mean and disagreeable object, though not unimportant to the spectator, as calling to mind the momentous changes wrought by such inventions in the frame of society—changes which have proved especially unfavourable to these mountain solitudes. So much had been effected by those new powers, before the subject of the preceding biographical sketch closed his life, that their operation could not escape his notice, and doubtless excited touching reflections upon the comparatively insignificant results of his own manual industry. But Robert Walker was not a man of times and circumstances: had he lived in a later period, the principle of duty would have produced application as unremitting; the same energy of character would have been displayed, though in many instances with widely-different effects.

With pleasure I annex, as illustrative and confirmatory of the above account, extracts from a paper in the 'Christian Remembrancer,' October, 1819; it bears an assumed signature, but is known to be the work of the Rev. Robert Bamford, vicar of Bishopston, in the county of Durham; a great-grandson of Mr. Walker, whose worth it commemorates, by a record not the less valuable for being written in very early youth.

'His house was a nursery of virtue. All the inmates were industrious, and cleanly, and happy. Sobriety, neatness, quietness, characterised the whole family. No railings, no idleness, no indulgence of passion were permitted. Every child, however young, had its appointed engagements; every hand was busy. Knitting, spinning, reading, writing, mending clothes, making shoes, were by the different children constantly performing. The father himself sitting amongst them, and guiding their thoughts, was engaged in the same occupations. . . .

'He sat up late, and rose early; when the family were at rest, he retired to a little room which he had built on the roof of his house. He had slated it, and fitted it up with shelves for his books, his stock of cloth, wearing apparel, and his utensils. There many a cold winter's night, without fire, while the roof was glazed with ice, did he remain reading or writing till the day dawned. He taught the children in the chapel, for there was no school-house. Yet in that cold, damp place he never had a fire. He used to send the children in parties either to his own fire at home, or make them run up the mountain side.

'It may be further mentioned, that he was a passionate admirer of Nature; she was his mother, and he was a dutiful child. While engaged on the mountains, it was his greatest pleasure to view the rising sun; and in tranquil evenings, as it slid

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behind the hills, he blessed its departure. He was skilled in fossils and plants; a constant observer of the stars and winds: the atmosphere was his delight. He made many experiments on its nature and properties. In summer he used to gather a multitude of flies and insects, and, by his entertaining description, amuse and instruct his children. They shared all his daily employments, and derived many sentiments of love and benevolence from his observations on the works and productions of nature. Whether they were following him in the field, or surrounding him in school, he took every opportunity of storing their minds with useful information.—Nor was the circle of his influence confined to Seathwaite. Many a distant mother has told her child of Mr. Walker, and begged him to be as good a man.

'Once, when I was very young, I had the pleasure of seeing and hearing that venerable old man in his 90th year, and even then, the calmness, the force, the perspicuity of his sermon, sanctified and adorned by the wisdom of grey hairs, and the authority of virtue, had such an effect upon my mind, that I never see a hoary-headed clergyman, without thinking of Mr. Walker. . . . He allowed no dissenter or methodist to interfere in the instruction of the souls committed to his cure: and so successful were his exertions, that he had not one dissenter of any denomination whatever in the whole parish. Though he avoided all religious controversies, yet when age had silvered his head, and virtuous piety had secured to his appearance reverence and silent honour, no one, however determined in his hatred of apostolic descent, could have listened to his discourse on ecclesiastical history and ancient times, without thinking that one of the beloved apostles had returned to mortality, and in that vale of peace had come to exemplify the beauty of holiness in the life and character of Mr. Walker.

'Until the sickness of his wife, a few months previous to her death, his health and spirits and faculties were unimpaired. But this misfortune gave him such a shock, that his constitution gradually decayed. His senses, except sight, still preserved their powers. He never preached with steadiness after his wife's death. His voice faltered: he always looked at the seat she had used. He could not pass her tomb without tears. He became, when alone, sad and melancholy, though still among his friends kind and good-humoured. He went to bed about twelve o'clock the night before his death. As his custom was, he went, tottering and leaning upon his daughter's arm, to examine the heavens, and meditate a few moments in the open air. "How clear the moon shines to-night!" He said these words, sighed, and laid down. At six next morning he was found a corpse. Many a tear, and many a heavy heart, and many a grateful blessing followed him to the grave.'

Having mentioned in this narrative the vale of Loweswater as a place where Mr. Walker taught school, I will add a few memoranda from its parish register, respecting a person apparently of desires as moderate, with whom he must have been intimate during his residence there.

'Let him that would, ascend the tottering seat
Of courtly grandeur, and become as great
As are his mounting wishes; but for me,
Let sweet repose and rest my portion be.

'HENRY FOREST, Curate.'

'Honour, the idol which the most adore,
Receives no homage from my knee;
Content in privacy I value more
Than all uneasy dignity.'

'Henry Forest came to Loweswater, 1708, being twenty-five years of age.'

'This curacy was twice augmented by Queen Anne's Bounty. The first payment, with great difficulty, was paid to Mr. John Curwen of London, on the 9th of May, 1724, deposited by me, Henry Forest, Curate of Loweswater. Ye said 9th of May, ye said Mr. Curwen went to the office, and saw my name registered there, &c. This, by the Providence of God, came by lot to this poor place.

'Hæc testor H. FOREST.'

In another place he records, that the sycamore trees were planted in the churchyard in 1710.

He died in 1741, having been curate thirty-four years. It is not improbable that H. Forest was the gentleman who assisted Robert Walker in his classical studies at Loweswater.

To this parish register is prefixed a motto, of which the following verses are a part:—

'Invigilate viri, tacito nam tempora gressu
Diffugiunt, nulloque sono convertitur annus;
Utendum est ætate, cito pede præterit ætas.'—W.

Page 303, last line.

'We feel that we are greater than we know.']

'And feel that I am happier than I know.'
MILTON.

The allusion to the Greek poet will be obvious to the classical reader.—W.

The poet in question is Moschus; the passage of which W. is thinking is from the *Epitaphium Bionis*, ll. 106–111.

The seventh line of the Sonnet is a reminiscence of the following line of Moschus:—

ἄμμες δ', οἱ μεγάλοι καὶ καρτεροὶ ἢ σοφοὶ ἄνδρες.—ED.

HIGHLAND HUT

Page 307.

This Sonnet describes the *exterior* of a Highland hut, as often seen under morning or evening sunshine. To the authoress of the 'Address to the Wind,' and other poems, in these volumes, who was my fellow-traveller in this tour, I am indebted for the following extract from her journal, which accurately describes, under particular circumstances, the beautiful appearance of the *interior* of one of these rude habitations.

'On our return from the Trosachs the evening began to darken, and it rained so heavily that we were completely wet before we had come two miles, and it was dark when we landed with our boatman, at his hut upon the banks of Loch Katrine. I was faint from cold: the good woman had provided, according to her promise, a better fire than we had found in the morning; and, indeed, when I sat down in the chimney-corner of her smoky biggin, I thought I had never felt more comfortable in my life: a pan of coffee was boiling for us, and, having put our clothes in the way of drying, we all sat down thankful for a shelter. We could not prevail upon our boatman, the master of the house, to draw near the fire, though he was cold and wet, or to suffer his wife to get him dry clothes till she had served us, which she did most willingly, though not very expeditiously.

'A Cumberland man of the same rank would not have had such a notion of what was fit and right in his own house, or, if he had, one would have accused him of servility; but in the Highlander it

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only seemed like politeness (however erroneous and painful to us), naturally growing out of the dependence of the inferiors of the clan upon their laird; he did not, however, refuse to let his wife bring out the whisky bottle for his refreshment, at our request. "She keeps a dram," as the phrase is; indeed, I believe there is scarcely a lonely house by the wayside, in Scotland, where travellers may not be accommodated with a dram. We asked for sugar, butter, barley-bread, and milk; and, with a smile and a stare more of kindness than wonder, she replied, "Ye'll get that," bringing each article separately. We caroused our cups of coffee, laughing like children at the strange atmosphere in which we were: the smoke came in gusts, and spread along the walls; and above our heads in the chimney (where the hens were roosting) it appeared like clouds in the sky. We laughed and laughed again, in spite of the smarting of our eyes, yet had a quieter pleasure in observing the beauty of the beams and rafters gleaming between the clouds of smoke: they had been crusted over, and varnished by many winters, till, where the twilight fell upon them, they had become as glossy as black rocks, on a sunny day, cased in ice. When we had eaten our supper we sat about half an hour, and I think I never felt so deeply the blessing of a hospitable welcome and a warm fire. The man of the house repeated from time to time that we should often tell of this night when we got to our homes, and interposed praises of his own lake, which he had more than once, when we were returning in the boat, ventured to say was "bonnier than Loch Lomond." Our companion from the Trosachs, who, it appeared, was an Edinburgh drawing-master going, during the vacation, on a pedestrian tour to John o' Groats's house, was to sleep in the barn with my fellow-travellers, where the man said he had plenty of dry hay. I do not believe that the hay of the Highlands is ever very dry, but this year it had a better chance than usual: wet or dry, however, the next morning they said they had slept comfortably. When I went to bed, the mistress, desiring me to "go ben," attended me with a candle, and assured me that the bed was dry, though not "sic as I had been used to." It was of chaff: there were two others in the room, a cupboard and two chests, upon one of which stood milk in wooden vessels, covered over. The walls of the house were of stone unplastered: it consisted of three apartments, the cowhouse at one end, the kitchen or house in the middle, and the spence at the other end; the rooms were divided not up to the rigging, but only to the beginning of the roof, so that there was a free passage for light and smoke from one end of the house to the other. I went to bed some time before the rest of the family; the door was shut between us, and they had a bright fire, which I could not see, but the light it sent up amongst the varnished rafters and beams, which crossed each other in almost as intricate and fantastic a manner as I have seen the under-boughs of a large beech-tree withered by the depth of shade above, produced the most beautiful effect that can be conceived. It was like what I should suppose an underground cave or temple to be, with a dripping or moist roof, and the moonlight entering in upon it by some means or other; and yet the colours were more like those of melted gems. I lay looking up till the light of the fire faded away, and the man and his wife and child had crept into their bed at the other end of the room: I did not sleep much, but passed a comfortable night; for my bed, though hard, was

warm and clean: the unusualness of my situation prevented me from sleeping. I could hear the waves beat against the shore of the lake; a little rill close to the door made a much louder noise, and, when I sat up in my bed, I could see the lake through an open window-place at the bed's head. Add to this, it rained all night. I was less occupied by remembrance of the Trosachs, beautiful as they were, than the vision of the Highland hut, which I could not get out of my head; I thought of the Faery-land of Spenser, and what I had read in romance at other times; and then what a feast it would be for a London Pantomime-maker could he but transplant it to Drury-lane, with all its beautiful colours!—MS.—W.

Page 309.

'Once on those steep / roamed.' The following is from the same MS., and gives an account of the visit to Bothwell Castle here alluded to:—

'It was exceedingly delightful to enter thus unexpectedly upon such a beautiful region. The castle stands nobly, overlooking the Clyde. When we came up to it, I was hurt to see that flower-borders had taken place of the natural overgrowings of the ruin, the scattered stones, and wild plants. It is a large and grand pile of red freestone, harmonising perfectly with the rocks of the river, from which, no doubt, it has been hewn. When I was a little accustomed to the unnaturalness of a modern garden, I could not help admiring the excessive beauty and luxuriance of some of the plants, particularly the purple-flowered clematis, and a broad-leaved creeping plant without flowers, which scrambled up the castle wall, along with the ivy, and spread its vine-like branches so lavishly that it seemed to be in its natural situation, and one could not help thinking that, though not self-planted among the ruins of this country, it must somewhere have its native abode in such places. If Bothwell Castle had not been close to the Douglas mansion, we should have been disgusted with the possessor's miserable conception of *adorning* such a venerable ruin; but it is so very near to the house, that of necessity the pleasure-grounds must have extended beyond it, and perhaps the neatness of a shaven lawn and the complete desolation natural to a ruin might have made an unpleasing contrast; and, besides being within the precincts of the pleasure-grounds, and so very near to the dwelling of a noble family, it has forfeited, in some degree, its independent majesty, and becomes a tributary to the mansion: its solitude being interrupted, it has no longer the command over the mind in sending it back into past times, or excluding the ordinary feelings which we bear about us in daily life. We had then only to regret that the castle and the house were so near to each other; and it was impossible *not* to regret it; for the ruin presides in state over the river, far from city or town, as if it might have a peculiar privilege to preserve its memorials of past ages, and maintain its own character for centuries to come. We sat upon a bench under the high trees, and had beautiful views of the different reaches of the river, above and below. On the opposite bank, which is finely wooded with elm and other trees, are the remains of a priory built upon a rock; and rock and ruin are so blended, that it is impossible to separate the one from the other. Nothing can be more beautiful than the little remnant of this holy place; elm-trees (for we were near enough to distinguish them by their branches) grow out of the walls, and overshadow a small, but very elegant window. It can scarcely be conceived what a grace

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the castle and priory impart to each other; and the river Clyde flows on, smooth and unruffled below, seeming to my thoughts more in harmony with the sober and stately images of former times, than if it had roared over a rocky channel, forcing its sound upon the ear. It blended gently with the warbling of the smaller birds, and the chattering of the larger ones, that had made their nests in the ruins. In this fortress the chief of the English nobility were confined after the battle of Bannockburn. If a man is to be a prisoner, he scarcely could have a more pleasant place to solace his captivity; but I thought that, for close confinement, I should prefer the banks of a lake, or the seashore. The greatest charm of a brook or river is in the liberty to pursue it through its windings: you can then take it in whatever mood you like; silent or noisy, sportive or quiet. The beauties of a brook or river must be sought, and the pleasure is in going in search of them; those of a lake or of the sea come to you of themselves. These rude warriors cared little, perhaps, about either; and yet, if one may judge from the writings of Chaucer, and from the old romances, more interesting passions were connected with natural objects in the days of chivalry than now; though going in search of scenery, as it is called, had not then been thought of. I had previously heard nothing of Bothwell Castle, at least nothing that I remembered; therefore, perhaps, my pleasure was greater, compared with what I received elsewhere, than others might feel.—*MS. Journal*.—W.

HART'S-HORN TREE

Page 310.

'In the time of the first Robert de Clifford, in the year 1333 or 1334, Edward Baliol king of Scotland came into Westmoreland, and stayed some time with the said Robert at his castles of Appleby, Brougham, and Pendragon. And during that time they ran a stag by a single greyhound out of Whinfield Park to Redkirk, in Scotland, and back again to this place; where, being both spent, the stag leaped over the pales, but died on the other side; and the greyhound, attempting to leap, fell, and died on the contrary side. In memory of this fact the stag's horns were nailed upon a tree just by, and (the dog being named Hercules) this rhythm was made upon them:

'Hercules kill'd Hart a greese,
And Hart a greese killed Hercules.'

The tree to this day bears the name of Hart's-horn Tree. The horns in process of time were almost grown over by the growth of the tree, and another pair was put up in their place.'—*Nicholson and Burns's History of Westmoreland and Cumberland*.

The tree has now disappeared, but I well remember its imposing appearance as it stood, in a decayed state, by the side of the high road leading from Penrith to Appleby. This whole neighbourhood abounds in interesting traditions and vestiges of antiquity, viz. Julian's Bower; Brougham and Penrith Castles; Penrith Beacon, and the curious remains in Penrith Churchyard; Arthur's Round Table, and, close by, Maybrough; the excavation, called the Giant's Cave, on the banks of the Emont; Long Meg and her daughters, near Eden, &c. &c.—W.

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE

Page 311.

The Poem of the White Doe of Rylstone is founded on a local tradition, and on the Ballad

in Percy's Collection, entitled 'The Rising of the North.' The tradition is as follows:—'About this time,' not long after the Dissolution, 'a White Doe,' say the aged people of the neighbourhood, 'long continued to make a weekly pilgrimage from Rylstone over the fells of Bolton, and was constantly found in the Abbey Churchyard during divine service; after the close of which she returned home as regularly as the rest of the congregation.'

—Dr. WHITAKER's *History of the Deanery of Craven*.—Rylstone was the property and residence of the Nortons, distinguished in that ill-advised and unfortunate Insurrection; which led me to connect with this tradition the principal circumstances of their fate, as recorded in the Ballad.

Bolton Priory, says Dr. Whitaker in his excellent book, 'The History and Antiquities of the Deanery of Craven,' 'stands upon a beautiful curvature of the Wharf, on a level sufficiently elevated to protect it from inundations, and low enough for every purpose of picturesque effect.'

Opposite to the East window of the Priory Church, the river washes the foot of a rock nearly perpendicular, and of the richest purple, where several of the mineral beds, which break out, instead of maintaining their usual inclination to the horizon, are twisted by some inconceivable process into undulating and spiral lines. To the South all is soft and delicious; the eye reposes upon a few rich pastures, a moderate reach of the river, sufficiently tranquil to form a mirror to the sun, and the bounding hills beyond, neither too near nor too lofty to exclude, even in winter, any portion of his rays.

But, after all, the glories of Bolton are on the North. Whatever the most fastidious taste could require to constitute a perfect landscape, is not only found here, but in its proper place. In front, and immediately under the eye, is a smooth expanse of park-like enclosure, spotted with native elm, ash, &c., of the finest growth: on the right a skirting oak wood, with jutting points of grey rock; on the left a rising copse. Still forward are seen the aged groves of Bolton Park, the growth of centuries; and farther yet, the barren and rocky distances of Simon-seat and Barden Fell contrasted with the warmth, fertility, and luxuriant foliage of the valley below.

About half a mile above Bolton the valley closes, and either side of the Wharf is overhung by solemn woods, from which huge perpendicular masses of grey rock jut out at intervals.

This sequestered scene was almost inaccessible till of late, that ridings have been cut on both sides of the river, and the most interesting points laid open by judicious thinnings in the woods. Here a tributary stream rushes from a waterfall, and bursts through a woody glen to mingle its waters with the Wharf: there the Wharf itself is nearly lost in a deep cleft in the rock, and next becomes a horned flood enclosing a woody island—sometimes it reposes for a moment, and then resumes its native character, lively, irregular, and impetuous.

The cleft mentioned above is the tremendous STRID. This chasm, being incapable of receiving the winter floods, has formed on either side a broad strand of naked grit-stone full of rock-basins, or "pots of the Linn," which bear witness to the restless impetuosity of so many Northern torrents. But, if here Wharf is lost to the eye, it amply repays another sense by its deep and solemn roar like "the Voice of the angry Spirit of the Waters," heard far above and beneath, amidst the silence of the surrounding woods.

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'The terminating object of the landscape is the remains of Barden Tower, interesting from their form and situation, and still more so from the recollections which they excite.'—W.

Page 312.

'Action is transitory.' This and the five lines that follow were either read or recited by me, more than thirty years since, to the late Mr. Hazlitt, who quoted some expressions in them (imperfectly remembered) in a work of his published several years ago.—W.

Page 312, l. 1.

'From Bolton's old monastic Tower.' It is to be regretted that at the present day Bolton Abbey wants this ornament, but the poem, according to the imagination of the Poet, is composed in Queen Elizabeth's time. 'Formerly,' says Dr. Whitaker, 'over the Transept was a tower. This is proved not only from the mention of bells at the Dissolution, when they could have had no other place, but from the pointed roof of the choir, which must have terminated westward, in some building of superior height to the ridge.'—W.

Page 312, l. 27.

'A Chapel, like a wild-bird's nest.' The Nave of the Church having been reserved at the Dissolution, for the use of the Saxon Cure, is still a parochial Chapel; and, at this day, is as well kept as the nearest English cathedral.—W.

Page 312, l. 34.

'Who sate in the shade of the Prior's Oak!'] 'At a small distance from the great gateway stood the Prior's Oak, which was felled about the year 1720, and sold for £70. According to the price of wood at that time, it could scarcely have contained less than 1400 feet of timber.'—W.

Page 314, l. 226.

'When Lady Aaliza mourned.' The detail of this tradition may be found in Dr. Whitaker's book, and in a Poem of this Collection, 'The Force of Prayer.'—W.

Page 314, l. 242.

'Pass, pass who will, yon chantry door;'] 'At the East end of the North aisle of Bolton Priory Church is a chantry belonging to Bethmesly Hall, and a vault, where, according to tradition, the Claphams (who inherited this estate, by the female line, from the Mauleverers) were interred upright.' John de Clapham, of whom this ferocious act is recorded, was a man of great note in his time: 'he was a vehement partisan of the house of Lancaster, in whom the spirit of his chieftains, the Cliffords, seemed to survive.'—W.

Page 314, l. 268.

'Who loved the Shepherd-lord to meet.' In the second Volume of these Poems [Collective Edition of 1820.—Ed.] will be found one entitled, 'Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle, upon the Restoration of Lord Clifford, the Shepherd, to the Estates and Honours of his Ancestors.' To that Poem is annexed an account of this personage, chiefly extracted from Burns and Nicholson's 'History of Cumberland and Westmoreland.' It gives me pleasure to add these further particulars concerning him, from Dr. Whitaker, who says he 'retired to the solitude of Barden, where he seems to have enlarged the tower out of a common keeper's lodge, and where he found a retreat

equally favourable to taste, to instruction, and to devotion. The narrow limits of his residence show that he had learned to despise the pomp of greatness, and that a small train of servants could suffice him, who had lived to the age of thirty a servant himself. I think this nobleman resided here almost entirely when in Yorkshire, for all his charters which I have seen are dated at Barden.

'His early habits, and the want of those artificial measures of time which even shepherds now possess, had given him a turn for observing the motions of the heavenly bodies; and, having purchased such an apparatus as could then be procured, he amused and informed himself by those pursuits, with the aid of the Canons of Bolton, some of whom are said to have been well versed in what was then known of the science.

'I suspect this nobleman to have been sometimes occupied in a more visionary pursuit, and probably in the same company.

'For, from the family evidences, I have met with two MSS., on the subject of Alchemy, which, from the character, spelling, &c., may almost certainly be referred to the reign of Henry the Seventh. If these were originally deposited with the MSS. of the Cliffords, it might have been for the use of this nobleman. If they were brought from Bolton at the Dissolution, they must have been the work of those Canons whom he almost exclusively conversed with.

'In these peaceful employments Lord Clifford spent the whole reign of Henry the Seventh, and the first years of his son. But in the year 1513, when almost sixty years old, he was appointed to a principal command over the army which fought at Flodden, and showed that the military genius of the family had neither been chilled in him by age, nor extinguished by habits of peace.

'He survived the battle of Flodden ten years, and died April 23rd, 1523, aged about 70. I shall endeavour to appropriate to him: a tomb, vault, and chantry, in the choir of the church of Bolton, as I should be sorry to believe that he was deposited, when dead, at a distance from the place which in his lifetime he loved so well.

'By his last will he appointed his body to be interred at Shap, if he died in Westmoreland; or at Bolton, if he died in Yorkshire.'

With respect to the Canons of Bolton, Dr. Whitaker shows from MSS. that not only alchemy but astronomy was a favourite pursuit with them.—W.

Page 317, ll. 594-5.

'Now joy for you who from the towers
Of Brancepeth look in doubt and fear,']

Brancepeth Castle stands near the river Were, a few miles from the city of Durham. It formerly belonged to the Nevilles, Earls of Westmoreland. See Dr. Percy's account.—W.

Page 319, ll. 814-15

'Of mitred Thurston—what a Host
He conquered!']

See the Historians for the account of this memorable battle, usually denominated the Battle of the Standard.—W.

Page 319, l. 828.

'In that other day of Neville's Cross?'] 'In the night before the battle of Durham was stricken and begun, the 17th day of October, anno 1346, there did appear to John Fosse, then Prior of the Abbey of Durham, a Vision, commanding him to take the holy Corporax-cloth, wherewith St.

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Cuthbert did cover the chalice when he used to say mass, and to put the same holy relique like to a banner-cloth upon the point of a spear, and the next morning to go and repair to a place on the west side of the city of Durham, called the Red Hills, where the Maid's Bower wont to be, and there to remain and abide till the end of the battle. To which vision the Prior obeying, and taking the same for a revelation of God's grace and mercy by the mediation of Holy St. Cuthbert, did accordingly the next morning, with the monks of the said abbey, repair to the said Red Hills, and there most devoutly humbling and prostrating themselves in prayer for the victory in the said battle: (a great multitude of the Scots running and pressing by them, with intention to have spoiled them, yet had no power to commit any violence under such holy persons, so occupied in prayer, being protected and defended by the mighty Providence of Almighty God, and by the mediation of Holy St. Cuthbert, and the presence of the holy relique). And, after many conflicts and warlike exploits there had and done between the English men and the King of Scots and his company, the said battle ended, and the victory was obtained, to the great overthrow and confusion of the Scots, their enemies: And then the said Prior and monks accompanied with Ralph Lord Nevil, and John Nevil his son, and the Lord Percy, and many other nobles of England, returned home and went to the abbey church, there joining in hearty prayer and thanksgiving to God and Holy St. Cuthbert for the victory achieved that day.

The battle was afterwards called the Battle of Nevil's Cross from the following circumstance:—
 'On the west side of the city of Durham, where two roads pass each other, a most notable, famous, and goodly cross of stonework was erected and set up to the honour of God for the victory there obtained in the field of battle, and known by the name of Nevil's Cross, and built at the sole cost of the Lord Ralph Nevil, one of the most excellent and chief persons in the said battle.' The Relique of St. Cuthbert afterwards became of great importance in military events. For soon after this battle, says the same author, 'The prior caused a goodly and sumptuous banner to be made,' (which is then described at great length), 'and in the midst of the same banner-cloth was the said holy relique and corporax-cloth enclosed, &c. &c., and so sumptuously finished, and absolutely perfected, this banner was dedicated to Holy St. Cuthbert, of intent and purpose that for the future it should be carried to any battle, as occasion should serve; and was never carried and showed at any battle but by the especial grace of God Almighty, and the mediation of Holy St. Cuthbert, it brought home victory; which banner-cloth, after the dissolution of the abbey, fell into the possession of Dean WHITTINGHAM, whose wife, called KATHARINE, being a French woman, (as is most credibly reported by eyewitnesses), was most injuriously burn the same in her fire, to the open contempt and disgrace of all ancient and goodly reliques.'—Extracted from a book entitled, 'Durham Cathedral, as it stood before the Dissolution of the Monastery.' It appears, from the old metrical History, that the above-mentioned banner was carried by the Earl of Surrey to Flodden Field.—W.

Page 322, ll. 1167-8.

'An edifice of warlike frame
 Stands single—Norton Tower its name—'
 It is so called to this day, and is thus described

by Dr. Whitaker:—'Rylstone Fell yet exhibits a monument of the old warfare between the Nortons and Cliffords. On a point of very high ground, commanding an immense prospect, and protected by two deep ravines, are the remains of a square tower, expressly said by Dodsworth to have been built by Richard Norton. The walls are of strong grout-work, about four feet thick. It seems to have been three stories high. Breaches have been industriously made in all the sides, almost to the ground, to render it untenable.

'But Norton Tower was probably a sort of pleasure-house in summer, as there are, adjoining to it, several large mounds, (two of them are pretty entire,) of which no other account can be given than that they were butts for large companies of archers.

'The place is savagely wild, and admirably adapted to the uses of a watch tower.'—W.

Page 326, ll. 1568-9.

—'despoil and desolation

O'er Rylstone's fair domain have blown;']

'After the attainder of Richard Norton his estates were forfeited to the crown, where they remained till the 2nd or 3rd of James; they were then granted to Francis Earl of Cumberland.' From an accurate survey, made at that time, several particulars have been extracted by Dr. W. It appears that the mansion-house was then in decay. Immediately adjoining is a close, called the Viver, so called, undoubtedly, from the French Vivier, or modern Latin Vivarium; for there are near the house large remains of a pleasure-ground, such as were introduced in the earlier part of Elizabeth's time, with topiary works, fishponds, and island, &c. The whole township was ranged by an hundred and thirty red deer, the property of the Lord, which, together with the wood, had after the attainder of Mr. Norton, been committed to Sir Stephen Tempest. The wood, it seems, had been abandoned to depredations, before which time it appears that the neighbourhood must have exhibited a forest-like and sylvan scene. In this survey among the old tenants, is mentioned one Richard Kitchen, butler to Mr. Norton, who rose in rebellion with his master, and was executed at Ripon.'—W.

Page 327, l. 1707.

'In the deep fork of Amerdale;'] 'At the extremity of the parish of Burnsal, the valley of Wharf forks off into two great branches, one of which retains the name of Wharfedale, to the source of the river; the other is usually called Littondale, but more anciently and properly, Amerdale. Dernbrook, which runs along an obscure valley from the N.W., is derived from a Teutonic word, signifying concealment.'—DR. WHITAKER.—W.

Page 327, ll. 1761-2.

'When the bells of Rylstone played
 Their sabbath music—"God us agbe"'

On one of the bells of Rylstone Church, which seems coeval with the building of the tower, is this cypher, 'E. A.' for John Norton, and the motto, 'God us agbe.'—W.

Page 328, l. 1803.

'The grassy rock-encircled Pound.'] Which is thus described by Dr. Whitaker:—'On the plain summit of the hill are the foundations of a strong wall stretching from the S.W. to the N.E. corner of the tower, and to the edge of a very deep glen. From this glen, a ditch, several hundred yards long,

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runs south to another deep and rugged ravine. On the N. and W. where the banks are very steep, no wall or mound is discoverable, paling being the only fence that could stand on such ground.

'From the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border it appears that such pounds for deer, sheep, &c. were far from being uncommon in the south of Scotland. The principle of them was something like that of a wire mouse-trap. On the declivity of a steep hill, the bottom and sides of which were fenced so as to be impassable, a wall was constructed nearly level with the surface on the outside, yet so high within, that without wings it was impossible to escape in the opposite direction. Care was probably taken that these enclosures should contain better feed than the neighbouring parks or forests; and whoever is acquainted with the habits of these sequeious animals, will easily conceive, that if the leader was once tempted to descend into the snare, a herd would follow.'

I cannot conclude without recommending to the notice of all lovers of beautiful scenery, Bolton Abbey and its neighbourhood. This enchanting spot belongs to the Duke of Devonshire; and the superintendence of it has for some years been entrusted to the Rev. William Carr, who has most skillfully opened out its features; and, in whatever he has added has done justice to the place, by working with an invisible hand of art in the very spirit of nature.—W.

ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

Page 329.

During the month of December, 1820, I accompanied a much-beloved and honoured Friend in a walk through different parts of his estate, with a view to fix upon the site of a new Church which he intended to erect. It was one of the most beautiful mornings of a mild season,—our feelings were in harmony with the cherishing influences of the scene; and such being our purpose, we were naturally led to look back upon past events with wonder and gratitude. and on the future with hope. Not long afterwards, some of the Sonnets which will be found towards the close of this series were produced as a private memorial of that morning's occupation.

The Catholic Question, which was agitated in Parliament about that time, kept my thoughts in the same course; and it struck me that certain points in the Ecclesiastical History of our Country might advantageously be presented to view in verse. Accordingly, I took up the subject, and what I now offer to the reader was the result.

When this work was far advanced, I was agreeably surprised to find that my friend, Mr. Southey, had been engaged with similar views in writing a concise History of the Church in England. If our Productions, thus unintentionally coinciding, shall be found to illustrate each other, it will prove a high gratification to me, which I am sure my friend will participate.

W. WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT,
January 24, 1822.

For the convenience of passing from one point of the subject to another without shocks of abruptness, this work has taken the shape of a series of Sonnets; but the Reader, it is to be hoped, will find that the pictures are often so closely connected as to have jointly the effect of passages of a poem in a form of stanza to which there is no objection but one that bears upon the Poet only—its difficulty.—W.

Page 329.

'Did Holy Paul,' &c.] Stillingfleet adduces many arguments in support of this opinion, but they are unconvincing. The latter part of this Sonnet refers to a favourite notion of Roman Catholic writers, that Joseph of Arimathea and his companions brought Christianity into Britain, and built a rude church at Glastonbury; alluded to hereafter, in a passage upon the dissolution of monasteries.—W.

Page 330.

'That Hill, whose flowery platform,' &c.] This hill at St. Alban's must have been an object of great interest to the imagination of the venerable Bede, who thus describes it, with a delicate feeling, delightful to meet with in that rude age, traces of which are frequent in his works:—'Variis herbarum floribus depictus imò usquequaque vestitus, in quo nihil repente arduum, nihil præceps, nihil abruptum, quem lateribus longè latèque deductum in modum æquoris natura complanat, dignum videlicet eum pro insitâ sibi specie venustatis jam olim reddens, qui beati martyris cruore dicaretur.'—W.

Page 331.

'Nor wants the cause the panic-striking aid
Of hallelujahs.']

Alluding to the victory gained under Germanus.
—See Bede.—W.

Page 331, XI, ll. 9, 10.

'By men yet scarcely conscious of a care
For other monuments than those of Earth;']

The last six lines of this Sonnet are chiefly from the prose of Daniel; and here I will state (though to the Readers whom this Poem will chiefly interest it is unnecessary) that my obligations to other prose writers are frequent,—obligations which, even if I had not a pleasure in courting, it would have been presumptuous to shun, in treating an historical subject. I must, however, particularise Fuller, to whom I am indebted in the Sonnet upon Wicliffe and in other instances. And upon the acquittal of the Seven Bishops I have done little more than versify a lively description of that event in the MS. Memoirs of the first Lord Lonsdale.—W.

SONNET XII

Page 331.

'Ethelforth reached the convent of Bangor, he perceived the Monks, twelve hundred in number, offering prayers for the success of their countrymen: "if they are praying against us," he exclaimed, "they are fighting against us;" and he ordered them to be first attacked: they were destroyed; and, appalled by their fate, the courage of Brocmail wavered, and he fled from the field in dismay. Thus abandoned by their leader, his army soon gave way, and Ethelforth obtained a decisive conquest. Ancient Bangor itself soon fell into his hands, and was demolished; the noble monastery was levelled to the ground; its library, which is mentioned as a large one, the collection of ages, the repository of the most precious monuments of the ancient Britons, was consumed; half ruined walls, gates, and rubbish were all that remained of the magnificent edifice.'—See Turner's valuable history of the Anglo-Saxons.

Taliesin was present at the battle which preceded this desolation.

The account Bede gives of this remarkable event,

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suggests a most striking warning against National and Religious prejudices.—W.

SONNET XV

Page 332.

The person of Paulinus is thus described by Bede, from the memory of an eye-witness:—*'Longæ stature, paululum incurvus, nigro capillo, facie macilentâ, naso adunco, perheniti, venerabilis simul et terribilis aspectu.'*—W.

Page 332.

'Man's life is like a Sparrow.'] See the original of this speech in Bede.—The Conversion of Edwin, as related by him, is highly interesting—and the breaking up of this Council accompanied with an event so striking and characteristic, that I am tempted to give it at length in a translation. *"Who,"* exclaimed the King, when the Council was ended, *"shall first desecrate the altars and the temples?"* *"I,"* answered the Chief Priest; *"for who more fit than myself, through the wisdom*

I worshipped?" Immediately, casting away vain superstition, he besought the King to grant him what the laws did not allow to a priest, arms and a courser (*equum emissarium*); which mounting, and furnished with a sword and lance, he proceeded to destroy the Idols. The crowd, seeing this, thought him mad—he, however, halted not, but, approaching, he profaned the temple, casting against it the lance which he had held in his hand, and, exulting in acknowledgment of the worship of the true God, he ordered his companions to pull down the temple, with all its enclosures. The place is shown where those Idols formerly stood, not far from York, at the source of the river Derwent, and is at this day called Gormund Gaham, *ubi pontifex ille, inspirante Deo vero, poluit ac destruxit eas, quas ipse sacraverat aras.* The last expression is a pleasing proof that the venerable monk of Wearmouth was familiar with the poetry of Virgil.—W.

Page 332.

—*'such the inviting voice
Heard near fresh streams;'*]

The early propagators of Christianity were accustomed to preach near rivers, for the convenience of baptism.—W.

SONNET XIX

Page 333.

Having spoken of the zeal, disinterestedness, and temperance of the clergy of those times, Bede thus proceeds:—*'Unde et in magna erat veneratione tempore illo religionis habitus, ita ut ubicunque clericus aliquis, aut monachus adveniret, gaudenter ab omnibus tanquam Dei famulus exciperetur. Etiam si in itinere pergens inveniretur, accurrebant, et flexâ cervice, vel manu signari, vel ore illius se benedicti, gaudebant. Verbis quoque horum exhortatoriis diligenter auditum præbebant.'* Lib. iii. cap. 26.—W.

Page 334, XXIV, 1. 2.

'The people work like congregated bees.'] See, in Turner's History, vol. iii. p. 528, the account of the erection of Ramsey Monastery. Penances were removable by the performance of acts of charity and benevolence.—W.

Page 334.

—*'pain narrows not his cares.'*] Through the whole of his life, Alfred was subject to grievous maladies.—W.

Page 335.

—*'Woe to the Crown that doth the Cowl obey!'*] The violent measures carried on under the influence of *Dunstan*, for strengthening the Benedictine Order, were a leading cause of the second series of Danish invasions.—See Turner.—W.

Page 337.

—*'Here Man more purely lives,' &c.]* Bonum est nos hic esse, quia homo vivit purius, cadit rarius, surgit velocius, incedit cautius, quiescit securius, moritur felicius, purgatur citius, præmiatur copiosius.—Bernard. *'This sentence,'* says Dr. Whitaker, *'is usually inscribed in some conspicuous part of the Cistercian houses.'*—W.

Page 339.

—*'Whom Obloquy pursues with hideous bark.'*] The list of foul names bestowed upon those poor

are drawn from circumstances into which they were forced by their persecutors, who even consolidated their miseries into one reproachful term, calling them Patarians, or Paturing, from *patis*, to suffer. *'Dwellers with wolves, she names them, for the pine And green oak are their covert; as the gloom Of night oft foils their enemy's design, She calls them Riders on the flying broom; Sorcerers, whose frame and aspect have become One and the same through practices malign.'*—W.

Page 341, XXI, ll. 7, 8.

—*'And the green lizard and the gilded newt
Lead unmolested lives, and die of age.'*]

These two lines are adopted from a MS., written about the year 1770, which accidentally fell into my possession. The close of the preceding Sonnet on monastic voluptuousness is taken from the same source, as is the verse, *'Where Venus sits,'* &c., and the line, *'Once ye were holy, ye are holy still,'* in a subsequent Sonnet.—W.

Page 343.

—*'One (like those prophets whom God sent of old)
Transfigured,' &c.]* M. Latimer suffered his keeper very quietly to pull off his hose, and his other array, which to looke unto was very simple: and being stripped into his shrowd, he seemed as comely a person to them that were present, as one should lightly see: and whereas in his clothes he appeared a withered and crooked sillie (weak) olde man, he now stood bold upright, as comely a father as one might lightly behold. . . . Then they brought a faggotte, kindled with fire, and laid the same downe at doctor Ridley's feete. To whome M. Latimer spake in this manner, *"Bee of good comfort, master Ridley, and play the man: wee shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England, as I trust shall never bee put out."*—Fox's Acts, &c.

Similar alterations in the outward figure and deportment of persons brought to like trial were not uncommon. See note to the above passage in Dr. Wordsworth's Ecclesiastical Biography, for an example in an humble Welsh fisherman.—W.

Page 344.

—*'The gift exalting, and with playful smile.'*] On foot they went, and took Salisbury in their way,

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purposely to see the good Bishop, who made Mr. Hooker sit at his own table; which Mr. Hooker boasted of with much joy and gratitude when he saw his mother and friends; and at the Bishop's parting with him, the Bishop gave him good counsel and his benediction, but forgot to give him money; which when the Bishop had considered, he sent a servant in all haste to call Richard back to him, and at Richard's return, the Bishop said to him, 'Richard, I sent for you back to lend you a horse, which hath carried me many a mile, and I thank God with much ease,' and presently delivered into his hand a walking-staff, with which he professed he had travelled through many parts of Germany; and he said, 'Richard, I do not give, but lend you my horse, be sure you be honest, and bring my horse back to me, at your return this way to Oxford. And I do now give you ten groats to bear your charges to Exeter; and here is ten groats more, which I charge you to deliver to your mother, and tell her I send her a Bishop's benediction with it, and beg the continuance of her prayers for me. And if you bring my horse back to me, I will give you ten groats more to carry you on foot to the college; and so God bless you, good Richard.'—See WALTON'S *Life of Richard Hooker*.—W.

Page 345, XLI, ll. 10, 11.

—craftily incites
The overweening, personates the mad—']

A common device in religious and political orifices.—See Strype in support of this instance.—W.

LAUD

Page 345.

In this age a word cannot be said in praise of Laud, or even in compassion for his fate, without incurring a charge of bigotry; but fearless of such imputation, I concur with Hume, 'that it is sufficient for his vindication to observe that his errors were the most excusable of all those which prevailed during that zealous period.' A key to the right understanding of those parts of his conduct that brought the most odium upon him in his own time, may be found in the following passage of his speech before the bar of the House of Peers:—'Ever since I came in place, I have laboured nothing more than the external public worship of God, so much slighted in divers parts of this kingdom, might be preserved, and that with as much decency and uniformity as might be. For I evidently saw that the public neglect of God's service in the outward face of it, and the nasty ying of many places dedicated to that service, *ad almost cast a damp upon the true and inward worship of God, which while we live in the body, needs external helps, and all little enough to keep it in any vigour.*'—W.

THE PILGRIM FATHERS

Pages 348, 349.

American episcopacy, in union with the church in England, strictly belongs to the general subject; and I here make my acknowledgments to my American friends, Bishop Doane, and Mr. Henry Teed of Philadelphia, for having suggested to me the propriety of adverting to it, and pointed out the virtues and intellectual qualities of Bishop White, which so eminently fitted him for the great work he undertook. Bishop White was consecrated at Lambeth, Feb. 4, 1787, by Archbishop Moore; and before his long life was closed, twenty-six bishops had been consecrated in America, by

himself. For his character and opinions, see his own numerous Works, and a 'Sermon in commemoration of him, by George Washington Doane, Bishop of New Jersey.'—W.

Page 349, XVIII, ll. 1-3.

'A genial hearth—
'And a refined rusticity, belong
To the neat mansion']

Among the benefits arising, as Mr. Coleridge has well observed, from a Church establishment of endowments corresponding with the wealth of the country to which it belongs, may be reckoned as eminently important, the examples of civility and refinement which the clergy stationed at intervals, afford to the whole people. The established clergy in many parts of England have long been, as they continue to be, the principal bulwark against barbarism, and the link which unites the sequestered peasantry with the intellectual advancement of the age. Nor is it below the dignity of the subject to observe, that their taste, as acting upon rural residences and scenery often furnishes models which country gentlemen, who are more at liberty to follow the caprices of fashion, might profit by. The precincts of an old residence must be treated by ecclesiastics with respect, both from prudence and necessity. I remember being much pleased, some years ago, at Rose Castle, the rural seat of the See of Carlisle, with a style of garden and architecture, which, if the place had belonged to a wealthy layman, would no doubt have been swept away. A parsonage-house generally stands not far from the church; this proximity imposes favourable restraints, and sometimes suggests an affecting union of the accommodations and elegancies of life with the outward signs of piety and mortality. With pleasure I recall to mind a happy instance of this in the residence of an old and much-valued friend in Oxfordshire. The house and church stand parallel to each other, at a small distance; a circular lawn or rather grass-plot, spreads between them; shrubs and trees curve from each side of the dwelling, veiling, but not hiding, the church. From the front of this dwelling, no part of the burial-ground is seen; but as you wind by the side of the shrubs towards the steeple-end of the church, the eye catches a single, small, low, monumental headstone, moss-grown, sinking into, and gently inclining towards the earth. Advance, and the churchyard, populous and gay with glittering tombstones, opens upon the view. This humble, and beautiful parsonage called forth a tribute, for which see the seventh of the 'Miscellaneous Sonnets,' Part III.—W.

SONNET XXXII

Page 352.

This is still continued in many churches in Westmoreland. It takes place in the month of July, when the floor of the stalls is strewn with fresh rushes; and hence it is called the 'Rush-bearing.'—W.

Page 353, XXXV, l. 10.

'Teaching us to forget them or forgive.'] This is borrowed from an affecting passage in Mr. George Dyer's history of Cambridge.—W.

Page 353, XXXVII, ll. 5, 6.

—'Had we, like them, endured
Sore stress of apprehension.']

See Burnet, who is unusually animated on this subject; the east wind, so anxiously expected and prayed for, was called the 'Protestant wind.'—W.

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Page 354, XL, ll. 9, 10.

'Yet will we not conceal the precious Cross,
Like men ashamed;']

The Lutherans have retained the Cross within their churches: it is to be regretted that we have not done the same.—W.

Page 355, XLVI, ll. 5, 6.

'Or like the Alpine Mount, that takes its name
From roseate hues,' &c.]

Some say that Monte Rosa take its name from a belt of rock at its summit—a very unpoetical and scarcely a probable supposition.—W.

Page 359, l. 49.

'Wings at my shoulders seem to play,'] In these lines I am under obligation to the exquisite picture of 'Jacob's Dream,' by Mr. Alstone, now in America. It is pleasant to make this public acknowledgment to a man of genius, whom I have the honour to rank among my friends.—W.

Page 364, IV, l. 5.

'But if thou, like Cocytus,' &c.] Many years ago, when I was at Greta Bridge, in Yorkshire, the hostess of the inn, proud of her skill in etymology, said, that 'the name of the river was taken from the *bridge*, the form of which, as every one must notice, exactly resembled a great A.' Dr. Whitaker has derived it from the word of common occurrence in the North of England, '*to greet*,' signifying to lament aloud, mostly with weeping: a conjecture rendered more probable from the stony and rocky channel of both the Cumberland and Yorkshire rivers. The Cumberland Greta, though it does not, among the country people, take up *that* name till within three miles of its disappearance in the River Derwent, may be considered as having its source in the mountain cove of Wythburn, and flowing through Thirlmere, the beautiful features of which lake are known only to those who, travelling between Grasmere and Keswick, have quitted the main road in the vale of Wythburn, and, crossing over to the opposite side of the lake, have proceeded with it on the right hand.

The channel of the Greta, immediately above Keswick, has, for the purposes of building, been in a great measure cleared of the immense stones which, by their concussion in high floods, produced the loud and awful noises described in the sonnet.

'The scenery upon this river,' says Mr. Southey in his 'Colloquies,' 'where it passes under the woody side of Latrigg, is of the finest and most memorable kind:—

—'ambiguo lapsu refluente fluitque,
Occurssuque sibi venturas aspicit undas.'—W.

Page 365, VIII, l. 11.

'By hooded Votaresses,' &c.] Attached to the church of Brigham was formerly a chantry, which held a moiety of the manor; and in the decayed parsonage some vestiges of monastic architecture are still to be seen.—W.

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS LANDING AT WORKINGTON

Page 365.

'The fears and impatience of Mary were so great,' says Robertson, 'that she got into a fishboat, and with about twenty attendants landed at Workington, in Cumberland; and thence she was conducted with many marks of respect to Carlisle.'

The apartment in which the Queen had slept at Workington Hall (where she was received by Sir Henry Curwen as became her rank and misfortunes) was long preserved, out of respect to her memory, as she had left it; and one cannot but regret that some necessary alterations in the mansion could not be effected without its destruction.—W.

STANZAS, &c.

Page 365.

St. Bees' Heads, anciently called the Cliff of Baruth, are a conspicuous sea-mark for all vessels sailing in the N.E. parts of the Irish Sea. In a bay, one side of which is formed by the southern headland, stands the village of St. Bees; a place distinguished, from very early times, for its religious and scholastic foundations.

'St. Bees,' says Nicholson and Burns, 'had its name from Bega, an holy woman from Ireland, who is said to have founded here, about the year of our Lord 650, a small monastery, where afterwards a church was built in memory of her.'

'The aforesaid religious house, being destroyed by the Danes, was restored by William de Meschiens, son of Ranulph, and brother of Ranulph de Meschiens, first Earl of Cumberland after the Conquest; and made a cell of a prior and six Benedictine monks to the Abbey of St. Mary at York.'

Several traditions of miracles, connected with the foundation of the first of these religious houses, survive among the people of the neighbourhood; one of which is alluded to in these Stanzas; and another, of a somewhat bolder and more peculiar character, has furnished the subject of a spirited poem by the Rev. R. Parkinson, M.A., late Divinity Lecturer of St. Bees' College, and now Fellow of the Collegiate Church of Manchester.

After the dissolution of the monasteries, Archbishop Grindal founded a free school at St. Bees, from which the counties of Cumberland and Westmoreland have derived great benefit; and recently, under the patronage of the Earl of Lonsdale, a college has been established there for the education of ministers for the English Church. The old Conventual Church has been repaired under the superintendence of the Rev. Dr. Ainger, the Head of the College; and is well worthy of being visited by any strangers who might be led to the neighbourhood of this celebrated spot.

The form of stanza in this Poem, and something in the style of versification, are adopted from the 'St. Monica,' a poem of much beauty upon a monastic subject, by Charlotte Smith: a lady to whom English verse is under greater obligations than are likely to be either acknowledged or remembered. She wrote little, and that little unambitiously, but with true feeling for rural nature, at a time when nature was not much regarded by English Poets; for in point of time her earlier writings preceded, I believe, those of Cowper and Burns.—W.

Page 366, l. 73.

'Are not, in sooth, their Requiem's sacred ties,'] I am aware that I am here treading upon tender ground; but to the intelligent reader I feel that no apology is due. The prayers of survivors, during passionate grief for the recent loss of relatives and friends, as the object of those prayers could no longer be the suffering body of the dying, would naturally be ejaculated for the souls of the departed; the barriers between the two worlds dis-

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solving before the power of love and faith. The ministers of religion, from their habitual attendance upon sick-beds, would be daily witnesses of these benign results, and hence would be strongly tempted to aim at giving to them permanence, by embodying them in rites and ceremonies, recurring at stated periods. All this, as it was in course of nature, so was it blameless, and even praiseworthy; since some of its effects, in that rude state of society, could not but be salutary. No reflecting person, however, can view without sorrow the abuses which rose out of thus formalising sublime instincts, and disinterested movements of passion, and perverting them into means of gratifying the ambition and rapacity of the priesthood. But, while we deplore and are indignant at these abuses, it would be a great mistake if we imputed the origin of the offices to prospective selfishness on the part of the monks and clergy: *they* were at first sincere in their sympathy, and in their degree dupes rather of their own creed, than artful and designing men. Charity is, upon the whole, the safest guide that we can take in judging our fellow-men, whether of past ages, or of the present time.—W.

Page 368.

'And they are led by noble Hillary.'] The TOWER OF REFUGE, an ornament to Douglas Bay, was erected chiefly through the humanity and zeal of Sir William Hillary; and he also was the founder of the lifeboat establishment at that place; by which, under his superintendence, and often by his exertions at the imminent hazard of his own life, many seamen and passengers have been saved.—W.

BY A RETIRED MARINER

Page 369.

This unpretending sonnet is by a gentleman nearly connected with me, and I hope, as it falls so easily into its place, that both the writer and the reader will excuse its appearance here.—W.

Page 369, XXI, l. 9.

'Off with yon cloud, old Snafell!'] The summit of this mountain is well chosen by Cowley as the scene of the 'Vision,' in which the spectral angel discourses with him concerning the government of Oliver Cromwell. 'I found myself,' says he, 'on the top of that famous hill in the Island Mona, which has the prospect of three great, and not long since most happy, kingdoms. As soon as ever I looked upon them, they called forth the sad representation of all the sins and all the miseries that had overwhelmed them these twenty years.' It is not to be denied that the changes now in progress, and the passions, and the way in which they work, strikingly resemble those which led to the disasters the philosophic writer so feelingly bewails. God grant that the resemblance may not become still more striking as months and years advance!—W.

ON REVISITING DUNOLLY CASTLE

Page 370.

This ingenious piece of workmanship, as I afterwards learned, had been executed for their own amusement by some labourers employed about the place.—W.

SONNET XXIX: CAVE OF STAFFA

Page 371.

The reader may be tempted to exclaim, 'How came this and the two following sonnets to be

written, after the dissatisfaction expressed in the preceding one?' In fact, at the risk of incurring the reasonable displeasure of the master of the steamboat, I returned to the cave, and explored it under circumstances more favourable to those imaginative impressions which it is so wonderfully fitted to make upon the mind.—W.

Page 372, XXXI.

'Hope smiled when your nativity was cast,
Children of Summer!']

Upon the head of the columns which form the front of the cave, rests a body of decomposed basaltic matter, which was richly decorated with that large bright flower, the ox-eyed daisy. I had noticed the same flower growing with profusion among the bold rocks on the western coast of the Isle of Man, making a brilliant contrast with their black and gloomy surfaces.—W.

IONA. UPON LANDING

Page 372.

The four last lines of this sonnet are adopted from a well-known sonnet of Russel, as conveying my feeling better than any words of my own could do.—W.

THE RIVER EDEN, CUMBERLAND

Page 373.

It is to be feared that there is more of the poet than the sound etymologist in this derivation of the name Eden. On the western coast of Cumberland is a rivulet which enters the sea at Moresby, known also in the neighbourhood by the name of Eden. May not the latter syllable come from the word Dean, a valley? Langdale, near Ambleside, is by the inhabitants called Langden. The former syllable occurs in the name Emont, a principal feeder of the Eden; and the stream which flows, when the tide is out, over Cartmel sands, is called the Eau-eau, French—aqua, Latin.—W.

Page 374, XLI, l. 14.

'Canal, and Viaduct, and Railway, tell!'] At Corby, a few miles below Nunnery, the Eden is crossed by a magnificent viaduct; and another of these works is thrown over a deep glen or ravine, at a very short distance from the main stream.—W.

Page 374, XLIII, l. 1.

'A weight of awe, not easy to be borne.'] The daughters of Long Meg, placed in a perfect circle eighty yards in diameter, are seventy-two in number above ground; a little way out of the circle stands Long Meg herself, a single stone, eighteen feet high. When I first saw this monument, as I came upon it by surprise, I might over-rate its importance as an object; but, though it will not bear a comparison with Stonehenge, I must say I have not seen any other relique of those dark ages which can pretend to rival it in singularity and dignity of appearance.—W.

TO THE EARL OF LONSDALE

Page 375.

This sonnet was written immediately after certain trials, which took place at the Cumberland Assizes, when the Earl of Lonsdale, in consequence of repeated and long-continued attacks upon his character, through the local press, had thought it right to prosecute the conductors and proprietors of three several journals. A verdict of libel

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was given in one case; and, in the others, the prosecutions were withdrawn, upon the individuals retracting and disavowing the charges, expressing regret that they had been made, and promising to abstain from the like in future.—W.

Page 392, l. 32.

'Descending to the worm in charity;'] I am indebted, here, to a passage in one of Mr. Digby's valuable works.—W.

SONNET IV

Page 402, l. 14.

'All change is perilous and all chance unsound.'
SPENSER.—W.

SONNET VIII

Page 403.

These lines were written several years ago, when reports prevailed of cruelties committed in many parts of America, by men making a law of their own passions. A far more formidable, as being a more deliberate mischief, has appeared among those States, which have lately broken faith with the public creditor in a manner so infamous. I cannot, however, but look at both evils under a similar relation to inherent good, and hope that the time is not distant when our brethren of the West will wipe off this stain from their name and nation.—W.

Additional Note.

I am happy to add that this anticipation is already partly realised; and that the reproach addressed to the Pennsylvanians in the next sonnet is no longer applicable to them. I trust that those other States to which it may yet apply will soon follow the example now set them by Philadelphia, and redeem their credit with the world.—W. 1850.

THE HORN OF EGREMONT CASTLE

Page 419.

This story is a Cumberland tradition. I have heard it also related of the Hall of Hutton John, an ancient residence of the Hudlestons, in a sequestered valley upon the river Dacor.—W.

THE RUSSIAN FUGITIVE

Page 424.

Peter Henry Bruce, having given in his entertaining *Memoirs* the substance of this Tale, affirms that, besides the concurring reports of others, he had the story from the lady's own mouth.

The Lady Catherine, mentioned towards the close, is the famous Catherine, then bearing that name as the acknowledged Wife of Peter the Great.—W.

THE FARMER OF TILSBURY VALE

Page 445.

With this picture, which was taken from real life, compare the imaginative one of 'The Reverie of Poor Susan,' page 149; and see (to make up the deficiencies of this class) 'The Excursion,' *passim*.—W.

Page 454 n.

Moss Campion (*Silene acaulis*.) This most beautiful plant is scarce in England, though it is found in great abundance upon the mountains of Scotland. The first specimen I ever saw of it, in its native bed, was singularly fine, the tuft or cushion being at least eight inches in diameter, and the root

proportionably thick. I have only met with it in two places among our mountains, in both of which I have since sought for it in vain.

Botanists will not, I hope, take it ill, if I caution them against carrying off, inconsiderately, rare and beautiful plants. This has often been done, particularly from Ingleborough and other mountains in Yorkshire, till the species have totally disappeared, to the great regret of lovers of nature living near the places where they grew.—W.

Page 457, XV, l. 23.

'From the most gentle creature nursed in fields.' This way of indicating the *name* of my lamented friend has been found fault with; perhaps rightly so; but I may say in justification of the double sense of the word, that similar allusions are not uncommon in epitaphs. One of the best in our language in verse, I ever read, was upon a person who bore the name of Palmer; and the course of the thought, throughout, turned upon the Life of the Departed, considered as a pilgrimage. Nor can I think that the objection in the present case will have much force with any one who remembers Charles Lamb's beautiful sonnet addressed to his own name, and ending,

'No deed of mine shall shame thee, gentle name!'
—W.

EXTEMPORE EFFUSION UPON THE DEATH OF JAMES HOGG

Page 459.

Walter Scott	.	died 21st Sept., 1832.
S. T. Coleridge		" 25th July, 1834.
Charles Lamb		" 27th Dec., 1834.
Geo. Crabbe		" 3rd Feb., 1832.
Felicia Hemans		" 16th May, 1835.

—W.

THE PRELUDE

The 1850 text of *The Prelude* has been corrected from the MS. which was sent to the printer, and in some places, where the reading is doubtful, by reference to earlier MSS.

Page 509, Bk. III, l. 104.

'In youth, or to be changed in after years.'] So 1857, but 1850 reads:—

'In youth, or to be changed in manhood's prime;
Or for the few who shall be called to look
On the long shadows in our evening years,
Ordained precursors to the night of death.'

There is no MS. authority for the change of l. 104 and the omission of the three lines following, and if there were one, it would have been as valid in 1850 as in 1857. It is probable that the change was made by Bishop Wordsworth on its being pointed out to him that the reading of 1850 was grammatically obscure.

Page 564, Bk. X, l. 187.

'utter.'] Professor Harper's emendation of 1850 'either,' which is clearly wrong.

THE EXCURSION. PREFACE

Page 590, ll. 83, 84.

'Descend, prophetic Spirit! instur'st
The human Soul,' &c.]

'Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic Soul
Of the wide world dreaming on things to come.'
SHAKESPEARE'S *Sonnets*.—W.

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Page 595.

'—much did he see of men.'] At the risk of giving a shock to the prejudices of artificial society, I have ever been ready to pay homage to the aristocracy of nature; under a conviction that vigorous human-heartedness is the constituent principle of true taste. It may still, however, be satisfactory to have prose testimony how far a Character, employed for purposes of imagination, is founded upon general fact. I, therefore, subjoin an extract from an author who had opportunities of being well acquainted with a class of men, from whom my own personal knowledge emboldened me to draw this portrait.

'We learn from Cæsar and other Roman Writers, that the travelling merchants who frequented Gaul and other barbarous countries, either newly conquered by the Roman arms, or bordering on the Roman conquests, were ever the first to make the inhabitants of those countries familiarly acquainted with the Roman modes of life, and to inspire them with an inclination to follow the Roman fashions, and to enjoy Roman conveniences. In North America, travelling merchants from the Settlements have done and continue to do much more towards civilizing the Indian natives, than all the missionaries, papist or protestant, who have ever been sent among them.

'It is farther to be observed, for the credit of this most useful class of men, that they commonly contribute, by their personal manners, no less than by the sale of their wares, to the refinement of the people among whom they travel. Their dealings form them to great quickness of wit and acuteness of judgment. Having constant occasion to recommend themselves and their goods, they acquire habits of the most obliging attention, and the most insinuating address. As in their peregrinations they have opportunity of contemplating the manners of various men and various cities, they become eminently skilled in the knowledge of the world. *As they wander, each alone, through thinly-inhabited districts, they form habits of reflection and of sublime contemplation.* With all these qualifications, no wonder, that they should often be, in remote parts of the country, the best mirrors of fashion, and censors of manners; and should contribute much to polish the roughness, and soften the rusticity of our peasantry. It is not more than twenty or thirty years since a young man going from any part of Scotland to England, of purpose to *carry the pack*, was considered as going to lead the life and acquire the fortune of a gentleman. When, after twenty years' absence, in that honourable line of employment, he returned with his acquisitions to his native country, he was regarded as a gentleman to all intents and purposes.'—HERON'S *Journey in Scotland*, vol. i, p. 89.—W.

Page 615.

'Lost in unsearchable eternity!'] Since this paragraph was composed, I have read with so much pleasure, in Burnet's 'Theory of the Earth,' a passage expressing corresponding sentiments, excited by objects of a similar nature, that I cannot forbear to transcribe it.

'Siquid verò Natura nobis dedit spectaculum, in hac tellure, verè gratum, et philosopho dignum, id semel mihi contigisse arbitror; cum ex celsissimâ rupē specularibundus ad oram maris Mediterraneæ, hinc æquor cœruleum, illinc tractus Alpino prospecti; nihil quidem magis dispar aut dissimile, nec in suo genere, magis egregium et singulare. Hoc theatrum ego faciliè præterulerim

Romanis cunctis, Græciæ: atque id quod natura hic spectandum exhibet, somniculis ludis omnibus, aut amphitheatri certaminibus. Nihil hic elegans aut venustum, sed ingens et magnificum, et quod placet magnitudine sua et quidam specie immensitatis. Hinc intuebar maris æquabilem superficiem, usque et usque diffusam, quantum maximum oculorum acies ferri potuit; illinc disruptissimam terræ faciem, erectas moles variè elevatas aut depressas, erectas, propendentes, reclinatas, coærcatas, omni situ inæquali et turbido. Placuit, ex hac parte, Naturæ unitas et simplicitas, et inexhausta quedam planities; ex alterâ, multiformis confusio magnorum corporum, et insanæ rerum strages: quas cum intuebar, non urbis alicujus aut oppidi, sed contracti mundi rudera, ante oculos habere mihi visus sum.

'In singulis ferè montibus erat aliquid insolens et mirabile, sed præ cæteris mihi placebat illa, quæ sedebam, rupes; erat maxima et altissima, et quæ terram respiciebat, molliori ascensu altitudinem suam dissimulabat: quæ verò mare horrendum præceps, et quasi ad perpendicularum facta, instat parietis. Præterea facies illa marina adeo erat lævis ac uniformis (quod in rupibus aliquando observare licet) ac si scissa fuisset à summo ad imum, in illo plano; vel ferè motu aliquo, aut fulmine, divulsa.

'Ima pars rupis erat cava, recessusque habuit, et saxeos specus, euntes in vacuum montem: sive naturâ pridem factos, sive exesos mari, et undarum crebris ictibus: In hos enim cum impetu ruebant et fragore, æstuantis maris fluctus; quos iterum spumantes reddidit antrum, et quas i ab imo ventre evomit.

'Dextrum latus montis erat præruptum, asperum saxo et nudâ caute; sinistram non adeo neglexerat Natura, arboribus utpote ornatum: et prope pedem montis rivus limpidæ aque prorupit; qui cum vicinam vallem irrigaverat, lento motu serpens, et per varios mæandros, quasi ad protrahendam vitam, in magno mari absorptus subito perit. Denique in summo vertice promontorii, commodè eminebat saxum, cui insidebam contemplabundus. Vale augusta sedes, Rege digna: Augusta rupes, semper mihi memoranda!'—Page 89. *Telluris Theoria sacra, etc. Editio secunda.*—W.

Page 624.

'Of Mississippi, or that northern stream.'] 'A man is supposed to improve by going out into the World, by visiting London. Artificial man does; he extends with his sphere; but, alas! that sphere is microscopic; it is formed of minutiae, and he surrenders his genuine vision to the artist, in order to embrace it in his ken. His bodily senses grow acute, even to barren and inhuman pruriency; while his mental become proportionally obtuse. The reverse is the Man of Mind: he who is placed in the sphere of Nature and of God, might be a mock at Tatletall's and Brooks's, and a sneer at St. James's: he would certainly be swallowed alive by the first Pizarro that crossed him:—But when he walks along the river of Amazons; when he rests his eye on the univalued Andes; when he measures the long and watered savannah; or contemplates, from a sudden promontory, the distant, vast Pacific—and feels himself a freeman in this vast theatre, and commanding each ready produced fruit of this wilderness, and each progeny of this stream—his exaltation is not less than imperial. He is as gentle, too, as he is great: his emotions of tenderness keep pace with his elevation of sentiment; for he says, "These were made by a good Being, who, unsought by me, placed me

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here to enjoy them." He becomes at once a child and a king. His mind is in himself; from hence he argues, and from hence he acts, and he argues unerringly, and acts magisterially; his mind in himself is also in his God; and therefore he loves, and therefore he soars.—From the notes upon 'The Hurricane,' a Poem, by William Gilbert.

The Reader, I am sure, will thank me for the above quotation, which, though from a strange book, is one of the finest passages of modern English prose.—W.

Page 627.

"Tis, by comparison, an easy task
Earth to despise," &c.]

See, upon this subject, Baxter's most interesting review of his own opinions and sentiments in the decline of life. It may be found (lately reprinted) in Dr. Wordsworth's 'Ecclesiastical Biography.'—W.

Page 628.

'Alas! the endowment of immortal power,
Is matched unequally with custom, time,' &c.]

This subject is treated at length in the Ode—
'Intimations of Immortality,' page 587.—W.

Page 629.

'Knowing the heart of man is set to be' &c.] The passage quoted from Daniel is taken from a poem addressed to the Lady Margaret, Countess of Cumberland, and the two last lines, printed in Italics, are by him translated from Seneca. The whole poem is very beautiful. I will transcribe four stanzas from it, as they contain an admirable picture of the state of a wise Man's mind in a time of public commotion.

'Nor is he moved with all the thunder-cracks
Of tyrant's threats, or with the surly brow
Of Power, that proudly sits on others' crimes;
Charged with more crying sins than those he checks.
The storms of sad confusion that may grow
Up in the present for the coming times,
Appal not him; that hath no side at all,
But of himself, and knows the worst can fall.

'Although his heart (so near allied to earth)
Cannot but pity the perplexed state
Of troublous and distressed mortality,
That thus make way unto the ugly birth
Of their own sorrows, and do still beget
Affliction upon Imbecility:
Yet seeing thus the course of things must run,
He looks thereon not strange, but as fore-done.

'And whilst distraught ambition compasses,
And is envious, whilst as craft deceives,
And is deceived; whilst man doth ransack man,
And builds on blood, and rises by distress;
And th' Inheritance of desolation leaves
To great-expecting hopes: He looks thereon,
As from the shore of peace, with unwet eye,
And bears no venture in Impleity.

'Thus, Lady, fares that man that hath prepared
A rest for his desires; and sees all things
Beneath him; and hath learned this book of man,
Full of the notes of frailty; and compared
The best of glory with her sufferings:
By whom, I see, you labour all you can
To plant your heart! and set your thoughts as near
His glorious mansion as your powers can bear.'—W.

Page 649.

'Or rather, as we stand on holy earth
And have the dead around us.')

'Leo. You, Sir, could help me to the history
Of half these graves?

Priest. For eight-score winters past,
With what I've witnessed, and with what I've
heard,
Perhaps I might; . . .
By turning o'er these hillocks one by one,
We two could travel, Sir, through a strange round;
Yet all in the broad highway of the world.'

See *The Brothers*.—W.

Page 653.

'And gentle "Nature grieved," &c.]

'And suffering Nature grieved that one should die.'
SOUTHEY'S *Retrospect*.—W.

Page 653.

'And whence that tribute? wherefore these regards?'] The sentiments and opinions here uttered are in unison with those expressed in the following Essay upon Epitaphs, which was furnished by me for Mr. Coleridge's periodical work, 'The Friend'; and as they are dictated by a spirit congenial to that which pervades this and the two succeeding books, the sympathising reader will not be displeased to see the Essay here annexed.—W.

ESSAY UPON EPITAPHS

It need scarcely be said, that an Epitaph presupposes a Monument, upon which it is to be engraven. Almost all Nations have wished that certain external signs should point out the places where their dead are interred. Among savage tribes unacquainted with letters this has mostly been done either by rude stones placed near the graves, or by mounds of earth raised over them. This custom proceeded obviously from a twofold desire; first, to guard the remains of the deceased from irreverent approach or from savage violation; and, secondly, to preserve their memory. 'Never any,' says Camden, 'neglected burial but some savage nations, as the Bactrians, which cast their dead to the dogs; some varlet philosophers, as Diogenes, who desired to be devoured of fishes; some dissolute courtiers, as Mæcenæ, who was wont to say, "Non tumultum curo; sepelitur natura relicto."'

'I'm careless of a grave:—Nature her dead will save.'

As soon as nations had learned the use of letters, epitaphs were inscribed upon these monuments; in order that their intention might be more surely and adequately fulfilled. I have derived monuments and epitaphs from two sources of feeling; but these do in fact resolve themselves into one. The invention of epitaphs, Weever, in his 'Discourse of Funeral Monuments,' says rightly, 'proceeded from the presage or fore-feeling of immortality, implanted in all men naturally, and is referred to the scholars of Linus the Theban poet, who flourished about the year of the world two thousand seven hundred; who first bewailed this Linus their Master, when he was slain, in doleful verses, then called of him *Elina*, afterwards *Epitaphia*, for that they were first sung at burials, after engraven upon the sepulchres.'

And, verily, without the consciousness of a principle of immortality in the human soul, Man could never have had awakened in him the desire to live in the remembrance of his fellows: mere love, or the yearning of kind towards kind, could not have produced it. The dog or horse perishes in the field, or in the stall, by the side of his companions, and is incapable of anticipating the sorrow with which his surrounding associates shall bemoan his death, or pine for his loss; he cannot

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pre-conceive this regret, he can form no thought of it; and therefore cannot possibly have a desire to leave such regret or remembrance behind him. Add to the principle of love which exists in the inferior animals, the faculty of reason which exists in Man alone; will the conjunction of these account for the desire? Doubtless it is a necessary consequence of this conjunction; yet not I think as a direct result, but only to be come at through an intermediate thought, viz. that of an intimation or assurance within us, that some part of our nature is imperishable. At least the precedence, in order of birth, of one feeling to the other, is unquestionable. If we look back upon the days of childhood, we shall find that the time is not in remembrance when, with respect to our own individual Being, the mind was without this assurance; whereas, the wish to be remembered by our friends or kindred after death, or even in absence, is, as we shall discover, a sensation that does not form itself till the *social* feelings have been developed, and the Reason has connected itself with a wide range of objects. Forlorn, and cut off from communication with the best part of his nature, must that man be, who should derive the sense of immortality, as it exists in the mind of a child, from the same unthinking gaiety or liveliness of animal spirits with which the lamb in the meadow, or any other irrational creature is endowed; who should ascribe it, in short, to blank ignorance in the child; to an inability arising from the imperfect state of his faculties to come, in any point of his being, into contact with a notion of death; or to an unreflecting acquiescence in what had been instilled into him! Has such an unfold of the mysteries of nature, though he may have forgotten his former self, ever noticed the early, obstinate, and unappeasable inquisitiveness of children upon the subject of origination? This single fact proves outwardly the monstrosity of those suppositions: for, if we had no direct external testimony that the minds of very young children meditate feelingly upon death and immortality, these enquiries, which we all know they are perpetually making concerning the *whence*, do necessarily include correspondent habits of interrogation concerning the *whither*. Origin and tendency are notions inseparably co-relative. Never did a child stand by the side of a running stream, pondering within himself what power was the feeder of the perpetual current, from what never-wearied sources the body of water was supplied, but he must have been inevitably propelled to follow this question by another: 'Towards what abyss is it in progress? what receptacle can contain the mighty influx?' And the spirit of the answer must have been, though the word might be sea or ocean, accompanied perhaps with an image gathered from a map, or from the real object in nature—these might have been the *letter*, but the *spirit* of the answer must have been as inevitably,—a receptacle without bounds or dimensions;—nothing less than infinity. We may, then, be justified in asserting, that the sense of immortality, if not a co-existent and twin birth with Reason, is among the earliest of her offspring; and we may further assert, that from these conjoined, and under their countenance, the human affections are gradually formed and opened out. This is not the place to enter into the recesses of these investigations; but the subject requires me here to make a plain avowal, that, for my own part, it is to me inconceivable, that the sympathies of love towards each other, which grow with our growth, could ever attain any new strength, or even preserve the old, after we had

received from the outward senses the impression of death, and were in the habit of having that impression daily renewed and its accompanying feeling brought home to ourselves, and to those we love; if the same were not counteracted by those communications with our internal Being, which are anterior to all these experiences, and with which revelation coincides, and has through that coincidence alone (for otherwise it could not possess it) a power to affect us. I confess, with me the conviction is absolute, that, if the impression and sense of death were not thus counterbalanced, such a hollowness would pervade the whole system of things, such a want of correspondence and consistency, a disproportion so astounding betwixt means and ends, that there could be no repose, no joy. Were we to grow up unfostered by this genial warmth, a frost would chill the spirit, so penetrating and powerful, that there could be no motions of the life of love; and infinitely less could we have any wish to be remembered after we had passed away from a world in which each man had moved about like a shadow.—If, then, in a creature endowed with the faculties of foresight and reason, the social affections could not have unfolded themselves uncountenanced by the faith that Man is an immortal being; and if, consequently, neither could the individual dying have had a desire to survive in the remembrance of his fellows, nor on their side could they have felt a wish to preserve for future times vestiges of the departed; it follows, as a final inference, that without the belief in immortality, wherein these several desires originate, neither monuments nor epitaphs, in affectionate or laudatory commemoration of the deceased, could have existed in the world.

Simonides, it is related, upon landing in a strange country, found the corse of an unknown person lying by the sea-side; he buried it, and was honoured throughout Greece for the piety of that act. Another ancient Philosopher, chancing to fix his eyes upon a dead body, regarded the same with slight, if not with contempt; saying, 'See the shell of the flown bird!' But it is not to be supposed that the moral and tender-hearted Simonides was incapable of the lofty movements of thought, to which that other Sage gave way at the moment while his soul was intent only upon the indestructible being; nor, on the other hand, that he, in whose sight a lifeless human body was of no more value than the worthless shell from which the living fowl had departed, would not, in a different mood of mind, have been affected by those earthly considerations which had incited the philosophic Poet to the performance of that pious duty. And with regard to this latter we may be assured that, if he had been destitute of the capability of communing with the more exalted thoughts that appertain to human nature, he would have cared no more for the corse of the stranger than for the dead body of a seal or porpoise which might have been cast up by the waves. We respect the corporeal frame of Man, not merely because it is the habitation of a rational, but of an immortal Soul. Each of these Sages was in sympathy with the best feelings of our nature; feelings which, though they seem opposite to each other, have another and a finer connection than that of contrast.—It is a connection formed through the subtle progress by which, both in the natural and the moral world, qualities pass insensibly into their contraries, and things revolve upon each other. As, in sailing upon the orb of this planet, a voyage towards the regions where

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the sun sets, conducts gradually to the quarter where we have been accustomed to behold it come forth at its rising; and, in like manner, a voyage towards the east, the birthplace in our imagination of the morning, leads finally to the quarter where the sun is last seen when he departs from our eyes; so the contemplative Soul, travelling in the direction of mortality, advances to the country of everlasting life; and, in like manner, may she continue to explore those cheerful tracts, till she is brought back, for her advantage and benefit, to the land of transitory things—of sorrow and of tears.

On a midway point, therefore, which commands the thoughts and feelings of the two Sages whom we have represented in contrast, does the Author of that species of composition, the laws of which it is our present purpose to explain, take his stand. Accordingly, recurring to the twofold desire of guarding the remains of the deceased and preserving their memory, it may be said that a sepulchral monument is a tribute to a man as a human being; and that an epitaph (in the ordinary meaning attached to the word) includes this general feeling and something more; and is a record to preserve the memory of the dead, as a tribute due to his individual worth, for a satisfaction to the sorrowing hearts of the survivors, and for the common benefit of the living: which record is to be accomplished, not in a general manner, but, where it can, in close connection with the bodily remains of the deceased: and these, it may be added, among the modern nations of Europe, are deposited within, or contiguous to, their places of worship. In ancient times, as is well known, it was the custom to bury the dead beyond the walls of towns and cities; and among the Greeks and Romans they were frequently interred by the waysides.

I could here pause with pleasure, and invite the Reader to indulge with me in contemplation of the advantages which must have attended such a practice. We might ruminate upon the beauty which the monuments, thus placed, must have borrowed from the surrounding images of nature—from the trees, the wild flowers, from a stream running perhaps within sight or hearing, from the beaten road stretching its weary length hard by. Many tender similitudes must these objects have presented to the mind of the traveller leaning upon one of the tombs, or reposing in the coolness of its shade, whether he had halted from weariness or in compliance with the invitation, 'Pause, Traveller!' so often found upon the monuments. And to its epitaph also must have been supplied strong appeals to visible appearances or immediate impressions, lively and affecting analogies of life as a journey—death as a sleep overcoming the tired wayfarer—of misfortune as a storm that falls suddenly upon him—of beauty as a flower that passeth away, or of innocent pleasure as one that may be gathered—of virtue that standeth firm as a rock against the beating waves;—of hope 'undimmed insensibly like the poplar by the side of the river that has fed it,' or blasted in a moment like a pine-tree by the stroke of lightning upon the mountain-top—of admonitions and heart-stirring remembrances, like a refreshing breeze that comes without warning, or the taste of the waters of an unexpected fountain. These, and similar suggestions, must have given, formerly, to the language of the senseless stone a voice enforced and endeared by the benignity of that nature with which it was in unison.—We, in modern times, have lost much of these advantages; and they are

but in a small degree counterbalanced to the inhabitants of large towns and cities, by the custom of depositing the dead within, or contiguous to, their places of worship; however splendid or imposing may be the appearance of those edifices, or however interesting or salutary the recollections associated with them. Even were it not true that tombs lose their monitory virtue when thus obtruded upon the notice of men occupied with the cares of the world, and too often sullied and defiled by those cares, yet still, when death is in our thoughts, nothing can make amends for the want of the soothing influences of nature, and for the absence of those types of renovation and decay, which the fields and woods offer to the notice of the serious and contemplative mind. To feel the force of this sentiment, let a man only compare in imagination the unsightly manner in which our monuments are crowded together in the busy, noisy, unclean, and almost grassless churchyard of a large town, with the still seclusion of a Turkish cemetery, in some remote place; and yet further sanctified by the grove of cypress in which it is embosomed. Thoughts in the same temper as these have already been expressed with true sensibility by an ingenious Poet of the present day. The subject of his poem is 'All Saints' Church, Derby:' he has been deploring the forbidding and unseemly appearance of its burial-ground, and uttering a wish, that in past times the practice had been adopted of interring the inhabitants of large towns in the country:—

'Then in some rural, calm, sequestered spot,
Where healing Nature her benignant look
Ne'er changes, save at that lorn season, when,
With tresses drooping o'er her sable stole,
She yearly mourns the mortal doom of man,
Her noblest work, (so Israel's virgins erst,
With annual moan upon the mountains wept
Their fairest gone,) there in that rural scene,
So placid, so congenial to the wish
The Christian feels, of peaceful rest within
The silent grave, I would have stayed.

—wandered forth, where the cold dew of heaven
Lay on the humbler graves around, what time
The pale moon gazed upon the turf's moulds,
Pensive, as though like me, in lonely muse,
'Twere brooding on the dead inhumed beneath.
There while with him, the holy man of Uz,
O'er human destiny I sympathised,
Counting the long, long periods prophecy
Decrees to roll, ere the great day arrives
Of resurrection, oft the blue-eyed Spring
Had met me with her blossoms, as the Dove,
Of old, returned with olive leaf, to cheer
The Patriarch mourning o'er a world destroyed:
And I would bless her visit; for to me
'Tis sweet to trace the consonance that links
As one, the works of Nature and the word
Of God.'—

JOHN EDWARDS.

A village churchyard, lying as it does in the lap of nature, may indeed be most favourably contrasted with that of a town of crowded population; and sepulture therein combines many of the best tendencies which belong to the mode practised by the Ancients, with others peculiar to itself. The sensations of pious cheerfulness, which attend the celebration of the sabbath-day in rural places, are profitably chastised by the sight of the graves of kindred and friends, gathered together in that general home towards which the thoughtful yet happy spectators themselves are journeying. Hence a parish-church, in the stillness of the country, is a visible centre of a community of the living

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and the dead; a point to which are habitually referred the nearest concerns of both.

As, then, both in cities and in villages, the dead are deposited in close connection with our places of worship, with us the composition of an epitaph naturally turns, still more than among the nations of antiquity, upon the most serious and solemn affections of the human mind; upon departed worth—upon personal or social sorrow and admiration—upon religion, individual and social—upon time, and upon eternity. Accordingly, it suffices in ordinary cases, to secure a composition of this kind from censure, that it contain nothing that shall shock or be inconsistent with this spirit. But, to entitle an epitaph to praise, more than this is necessary. It ought to contain some thought or feeling belonging to the mortal or immortal part of our nature touchingly expressed; and if that be done, however general or even trite the sentiment may be, every man of pure mind will read the words with pleasure and gratitude. A husband bewails a wife; a parent breathes a sigh of disappointed hope over a lost child; a son utters a sentiment of filial reverence for a departed father or mother; a friend perhaps inscribes an eulogium recording the companionable qualities, or the solid virtues, of the tenant of the grave, whose departure has left a sadness upon his memory. This and a pious admonition to the living, and a humble expression of Christian confidence in immortality, is the language of a thousand churchyards; and it does not often happen that anything, in a greater degree discriminate or appropriate to the dead or to the living, is to be found in them. This want of discrimination has been ascribed by Dr. Johnson, in his Essay upon the epitaphs of Pope, to two causes; first, the scantiness of the objects of human praise; and, secondly, the want of variety in the characters of men; or, to use his own words, 'to the fact, that the greater part of mankind have no character at all.' Such language may be holden without blame among the generalities of common conversation; but does not become a critic and a moralist speaking seriously upon a serious subject. The objects of admiration in human nature are not scanty, but abundant; and every man has a character of his own, to the eye that has skill to perceive it. The real cause of the acknowledged want of discrimination in sepulchral memorials is this: That to analyse the characters of others, especially of those whom we love, is not a common or natural employment of men at any time. We are not anxious unerringly to understand the constitution of the minds of those who have soothed, who have cheered, who have supported us; with whom we have been long and daily pleased or delighted. The affections are their own justification. The light of love in our hearts is a satisfactory evidence that there is a body of worth in the minds of our friends or kindred, whence that light has proceeded. We shrink from the thought of placing their merits and defects to be weighed against each other in the nice balance of pure intellect; nor do we find much temptation to detect the shades by which a good quality or virtue is discriminated in them from an excellence known by the same general name as it exists in the mind of another; and, least of all, do we incline to these refinements when under the pressure of sorrow, admiration, or regret, or when actuated by any of those feelings which incite men to prolong the memory of their friends and kindred, by records placed in the bosom of the all-uniting and equalising receptacle of the dead.

The first requisite, then, in an Epitaph is, that

it should speak, in a tone which shall sink into the heart, the general language of humanity as connected with the subject of death—the source from which an epitaph proceeds—of death, and of life. To be born and to die are the two points in which all men feel themselves to be in absolute coincidence. This general language may be uttered so strikingly as to entitle an epitaph to high praise; yet it cannot lay claim to the highest unless other excellencies be superadded. Passing through all intermediate steps, we will attempt to determine at once what these excellencies are, and wherein consists the perfection of this species of composition.—It will be found to lie in a due proportion of the common or universal feeling of humanity to sensations excited by a distinct and clear conception, conveyed to the reader's mind, of the individual, whose death is deplored and whose memory is to be preserved; at least of his character as, after death, it appeared to those who loved him and lament his loss. The general sympathy ought to be quickened, provoked, and diversified, by particular thoughts, actions, images,—circumstances of age, occupation, manner of life, prosperity which the deceased had known, or adversity to which he had been subject; and these ought to be bound together and solemnised into one harmony by the general sympathy. The two powers should temper, restrain, and exalt each other. The reader ought to know who and what the man was whom he is called upon to think of with interest. A distinct conception should be given (implicitly where it can, rather than explicitly) of the individual lamented.—But the writer of an epitaph is not an anatomist, who dissects the internal frame of the mind; he is not even a painter, who executes a portrait at leisure and in entire tranquillity: his delineation, we must remember, is performed by the side of the grave; and, what is more, the grave of one whom he loves and admires. What purity and brightness is that virtue clothed in, the image of which must no longer bless our living eyes! The character of a deceased friend or beloved kinsman is not seen, no—nor ought to be seen, otherwise than as a tree through a tender haze or a luminous mist, that spiritualises and beautifies it; that takes away, indeed, but only to the end that the parts which are not abstracted may appear more dignified and lovely; may impress and affect the more. Shall we say, then, that this is not truth, not a faithful image; and that, accordingly, the purposes of commemoration cannot be answered?—It is truth, and of the highest order; for, though doubtless things are not apparent which did exist; yet, the object being looked at through this medium, parts and proportions are brought into distinct view which before had been only imperfectly or unconsciously seen: it is truth hallowed by love—the joint offspring of the worth of the dead and the affections of the living! This may easily be brought to the test. Let one, whose eyes have been sharpened by personal hostility to discover what was amiss in the character of a good man, hear the tidings of his death, and what a change is wrought in a moment! Enmity melts away; and, as it disappears, unsightliness, disproportion, and deformity, vanish; and, through the influence of commiseration, a harmony of love and beauty succeeds. Bring such a man to the tombstone on which shall be inscribed an epitaph on his adversary, composed in the spirit which we have recommended. Would he turn from it as from an idle tale? No;—the thoughtful look, the sigh, and perhaps the involuntary tear, would testify that it had a sane, a generous, and good

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meaning, and that on the writer's mind had remained an impression which was a true abstract of the character of the deceased; that his gifts and graces were remembered in the simplicity in which they ought to be remembered. The composition and quality of the mind of a virtuous man, contemplated by the side of the grave where his body is mouldering, ought to appear, and be felt as something midway between what he was on earth walking about with his living frailties, and what he may be presumed to be as a Spirit in heaven.

It suffices, therefore, that the trunk and the main branches of the worth of the deceased be boldly and unaffectedly represented. Any further detail, minutely and scrupulously pursued, especially if this be done with laborious and antithetic discriminations, must inevitably frustrate its own purpose; forcing the passing Spectator to this conclusion,—either that the dead did not possess the merits ascribed to him, or that they who have raised a monument to his memory, and must therefore be supposed to have been closely connected with him, were incapable of perceiving those merits; or at least during the act of composition had lost sight of them; for, the understanding having been so busy in its petty occupation, how could the heart of the mourner be other than cold? and in either of these cases, whether the fault be on the part of the buried person or the survivors, the memorial is unaffecting and profitless.

Much better is it to fall short in discrimination than to pursue it too far, or to labour it unfeelingly. For in no place are we so much disposed to dwell upon those points, of nature and condition, wherein all men resemble each other, as in the temple where the universal Father is worshipped, or by the side of the grave which gathers all human Beings to itself, and 'equalises the lofty and the low.' We suffer and we weep with the same heart; we love and are anxious for one another in one spirit; our hopes look to the same quarter; and the virtues by which we are all to be furthered and supported, as patience, meekness, good-will, justice, temperance, and temperate desires, are in an equal degree the concern of us all. Let an Epitaph, then, contain at least these acknowledgments to our common nature; nor let the sense of their importance be sacrificed to a balance of opposite qualities or minute distinctions in individual character; which if they do not, (as will for the most part be the case,) when examined, resolve themselves into a trick of words, will, even when they are true and just, for the most part be grievously out of place; for, as it is probable that few only have explored these intricacies of human nature, so can the tracing of them be interesting only to a few. But an epitaph is not a proud writing shut up for the studios: it is exposed to all—to the wise and the most ignorant; it is condescending, perspicuous, and lovingly solicits regard; its story and admonitions are brief, that the thoughtless, the busy, and indolent, may not be deterred, nor the impatient tired: the stooping old man cons the engraven record like a second horn-book;—the child is proud that he can read it;—and the stranger is introduced through its mediation to the company of a friend: it is concerning all, and for all;—in the churchyard it is open to the day; the sun looks down upon the stone, and the rains of heaven beat against it.

Yet, though the writer who would excite sympathy is bound in this case, more than in any other, to give proof that he himself has been moved, it is to be remembered, that to raise a monument is a sober and a reflective act; that the

inscription which it bears is intended to be permanent, and for universal perusal; and that, for this reason, the thoughts and feelings expressed should be permanent also—liberated from that weakness and anguish of sorrow which is in nature transitory, and which with instinctive decency retires from notice. The passions should be subdued, the emotions controlled; strong, indeed, but nothing ungovernable or wholly involuntary. Seemliness requires this, and truth requires it also: for how can the narrator otherwise be trusted? Moreover, a grave is a tranquillising object; resignation in course of time springs up from it as naturally as the wild flowers, besprinkling the turf with which it may be covered, or gathering round the monument by which it is defended. The very form and substance of the monument which has received the inscription, and the appearance of the letters, testifying with what a slow and laborious hand they must have been engraven, might seem to reproach the author who had given way on this occasion to transports of mind, or to quick turns of conflicting passion; though the same might constitute the life and beauty of a funeral oration or elegiac poem.

These sensations and judgments, acted upon perhaps unconsciously, have been one of the main causes why epitaphs so often personate the deceased, and represent him as speaking from his own tomb-stone. The departed Mortal is introduced telling you himself that his pains are gone; that a state of rest is come; and he conjures you to weep for him no longer. He admonishes with the voice of one experienced in the vanity of those affections which are confined to earthly objects, and gives a verdict like a superior Being, performing the office of a judge, who has no temptations to mislead him, and whose decision cannot but be dispassionate. Thus is death disarmed of its sting, and affliction unsubstantialised. By this tender fiction, the survivors bind themselves to a sedate sorrow, and employ the intervention of the imagination in order that the reason may speak her own language earlier than she would otherwise have been enabled to do. This shadowy interposition also harmoniously unites the two worlds of the living and the dead by their appropriate affections. And it may be observed, that here we have an additional proof of the propriety with which sepulchral inscriptions were referred to the consciousness of immortality as their primal source.

I do not speak with a wish to recommend that an epitaph should be cast in this mould preferably to the still more common one, in which what is said comes from the survivors directly; but rather to point out how natural those feelings are which have induced men, in all states and ranks of society, so frequently to adopt this mode. And this I have done chiefly in order that the laws, which ought to govern the composition of the other, may be better understood. This latter mode, namely, that in which the survivors speak in their own persons, seems to me upon the whole greatly preferable: as it admits a wider range of notices; and, above all, because, excluding the fiction which is the groundwork of the other, it rests upon a more solid basis.

Enough has been said to convey our notion of a perfect epitaph; but it must be borne in mind that one is meant which will best answer the general ends of that species of composition. According to the course pointed out, the worth of private life, through all varieties of situation and character, will be most honourably and profitably preserved in memory. Nor would the model recommended

less suit public men, in all instances save of those persons who by the greatness of their services in the employments of peace or war, or by the surpassing excellence of their works in art, literature, or science, have made themselves not only universally known, but have filled the heart of their country with everlasting gratitude. Yet I must here pause to correct myself. In describing the general tenour of thought which epitaphs ought to hold, I have omitted to say, that if it be the actions of a man, or even some one conspicuous or beneficial act of local or general utility, which have distinguished him, and excited a desire that he should be remembered, then, of course, ought the attention to be directed chiefly to those actions or that act; and such sentiments dwell upon as naturally arise out of them or it. Having made this necessary distinction, I proceed.—The mighty benefactors of mankind, as they are not only known by the immediate survivors, but will continue to be known familiarly to latest posterity, do not stand in need of biographic sketches, in such a place; nor of delineations of character to individualise them. This is already done by their Works, in the memories of men. Their naked names, and a grand comprehensive sentiment of civic gratitude, patriotic love, or human admiration—or the utterance of some elementary principle most essential in the constitution of true virtue;—or a declaration touching that pious humility and self-abasement, which are ever most profound as minds are most susceptible of genuine exaltation—or an intuition, communicated in adequate words, of the sublimity of intellectual power;—these are the only tribute which can here be paid—the only offering that upon such an altar would not be unworthy.

*What needs my Shakspeare for his honoured bones
The labour of an age in piled stones,
Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid
Under a star-pointing pyramid?
Dear son of Memory, great Heir of Fame,
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou art our wonder and astonishment,
Hast built thyself a livelong monument,
And so sepulchred, in such pomp dost lie,
That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.'
W.

Page 654.

'And spires whose "silent finger points to heaven".'] An instinctive taste teaches men to build their churches in flat countries with spire-

steeples, which as they cannot be referred to any other object, point as with silent finger to the sky and stars, and sometimes, when they reflect the brazen light of a rich though rainy sunset, appear like a pyramid of flame burning heavenward. See 'The Friend,' by S. T. Coleridge, No. 14, p. 223.

Page 675.

'That sycamore, which annually holds
Within its shade, as in a stately tent.']

'This Sycamore oft musical with Boes;
Such Tents the Patriarchs loved.'

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Page 680.

'Perish the roses and the flowers of kings.'] The 'Transit gloria mundi' is finely expressed in the Introduction to the Foundation-charters of some of the ancient Abbeys. Some expressions here used are taken from that of the Abbey of St. Mary's Furness, the translation of which is as follows:—

'Considering every day the uncertainty of life, that the roses and flowers of Kings, Emperors, and Dukes, and the crowns and palms of all the great, wither and decay; and that all things, with an uninterrupted course, tend to dissolution and death: I therefore, &c.—W.

Page 682.

'Earth has lent
Her waters, Air her breezes.']

In treating this subject, it was impossible not to recollect, with gratitude, the pleasing picture, which, in his Poem of the Fleece, the excellent and amiable Dyer has given of the influences of manufacturing industry upon the face of this Island. He wrote at a time when machinery was first beginning to be introduced, and his benevolent heart prompted him to augur from it nothing but good. Truth has compelled me to dwell upon the baneful effects arising out of an ill-regulated and excessive application of powers so admirable in themselves.—W.

Page 692.

'Binding herself by statute.'] The discovery of Dr. Bell affords marvellous facilities for carrying this into effect; and it is impossible to overrate the benefit which might accrue to humanity from the universal application of this simple engine under an enlightened and conscientious government.—W.

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ETC., ETC.

MUCH the greatest part of the foregoing Poems has been so long before the Public that no prefatory matter, explanatory of any portion of them, or of the arrangement which has been adopted, appears to be required; and had it not been for the observations contained in those Prefaces upon the principles of Poetry in general they would not have been reprinted even as an Appendix in this Edition. [W. W. ed. 1849-50.]

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION OF SEVERAL OF THE FOREGOING POEMS PUBLISHED, WITH AN ADDITIONAL VOLUME, UNDER THE TITLE OF 'LYRICAL BALLADS.'

[*Note.*—In succeeding Editions, when the Collection was much enlarged and diversified, this Preface was transferred to the end of the Volumes as having little of a special application to their contents.]

THE first Volume of these Poems has already been submitted to general perusal. It was published, as an experiment, which I hoped, might be of some use to ascertain, how far, by fitting to metrical arrangement a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation, that sort of pleasure and that quantity of pleasure may be imparted, which a Poet may rationally endeavour to impart.

I had formed no very inaccurate estimate of the probable effect of those Poems: I flattered myself that they who should be pleased with them would read them with more than common pleasure; and, on the other hand, I was well aware, that by those who should dislike them, they would be read with more than common dislike. The result has differed from my expectation in this only, that a greater number have been pleased than I ventured to hope I should please.

Several of my Friends are anxious for the success of these Poems, from a belief, that, if the views with which they were composed were indeed realised, a class of Poetry would be produced, well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and not unimportant in the quality, and in the multiplicity of its moral relations: and on this account they have advised me to prefix a systematic defence of the theory upon which the Poems were written. But I was unwilling to undertake the task, knowing that on this occasion the Reader would look coldly upon my arguments, since I might be suspected of having been principally influenced by the selfish and foolish hope of reasoning him into an approbation of these particular Poems: and I was still more unwilling to undertake the task, because, adequately to display the opinions, and fully to enforce the arguments, would require a space wholly disproportionate to a preface. For, to treat the subject with the clearness and coherence of which it is susceptible, it would be necessary to give a full account of the present state of the public taste in this country, and to determine how far this taste is healthy or depraved; which, again, could not be determined, without pointing out in what manner language and the human mind act and re-act on each other, and without retracing the revolutions, not of literature alone, but likewise of society itself. I have therefore altogether declined to enter regularly upon this defence; yet I am sensible, that there would be something like impropriety in abruptly obtruding upon the Public, without a few words of introduction, Poems so materially dif-

ferent from those upon which general approbation is at present bestowed.

It is supposed, that by the act of writing in verse an Author makes a formal engagement that he will gratify certain known habits of association; that he not only thus apprises the Reader that certain classes of ideas and expressions will be found in his book, but that others will be carefully excluded. This exponent or symbol held forth by metrical language must in different eras of literature have excited very different expectations: for example, in the age of Catullus, Terence, and Lucretius, and that of Statius or Claudian; and in our own country, in the age of Shakespeare and Beaumont and Fletcher, and that of Donne and Cowley, or Dryden, or Pope. I will not take upon me to determine the exact import of the promise which, by the act of writing in verse, an Author in the present day makes to his reader: but it will undoubtedly appear to many persons that I have not fulfilled the terms of an engagement thus voluntarily contracted. They who have been accustomed to the gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers, if they persist in reading this book to its conclusion, will, no doubt, frequently have to struggle with feelings of impatience and awkwardness: they will not be bound for poetry, and will be induced to quit it, by what species of courtesy these attempts can be permitted to assume. I hope therefore the reader will not censure me for attempting to state what I have proposed to myself to perform; and also (as far as the limits of a preface will permit) to explain some of the chief reasons which have determined me in the choice of my purpose: that at least he may be spared any unpleasant feeling of disappointment, and that I myself may be protected from one of the most dishonourable accusations which can be brought against an Author; namely, that of an indolence which prevents him from endeavouring to ascertain what is his duty, or, when his duty is ascertained, prevents him from performing it.

The principal object, then, proposed in these Poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible in a selection of language really used by men, and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect; and, further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature: chiefly, as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement. Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because, in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can

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attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings exist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings, and, from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended, and are more durable; and, lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. The language, too, of these men has been adopted (purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust) because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly, such a language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language, than that which is frequently substituted for it by Poets, who think that they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art, in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle tastes, and fickle appetites, of their own creation¹.

I cannot, however, be insensible to the present outcry against the triviality and meanness, both of thought and language, which some of my contemporaries have occasionally introduced into their metrical compositions; and I acknowledge that this defect, where it exists, is more dishonourable to the Writer's own character than false refinement or arbitrary innovation, though I should contend at the same time, that it is far less pernicious in the sum of its consequences. From such verses as these Poems in these volumes will be found distinguished, at least by one mark of difference, that each of them has a worthy purpose. Not that I always mean to write with a distinct purpose formally conceived; but habits of meditation have, I trust, so prompted and regulated my feelings, that my descriptions of such objects as strongly excite those feelings, will be found to carry along with them a purpose. If this opinion be erroneous, I can have little right to the name of a Poet. For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: and though this be true, Poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who, being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply. For our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings; and, as by contemplating the relation of these general representatives to each other, we discover what is really important to men, so, by the repetition and continuance of this act, our feelings will be connected with important subjects, till at length, if we be originally possessed of much sensibility, such habits of mind will be produced, that, by obeying blindly and mechanically the impulses of those habits, we shall describe objects, and utter

¹ It is worth while here to observe, that the affecting parts of Chaucer are almost always expressed in language pure and universally intelligible even to this day.

sentiments, of such a nature, and in such connection with each other, that the understanding of the Reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections strengthened and purified.

It has been said that each of these poems has a purpose. Another circumstance must be mentioned which distinguishes these Poems from the popular Poetry of the day; it is this, that the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling.

A sense of false modesty shall not prevent me from asserting, that the Reader's attention is pointed to this mark of distinction, far less for the sake of these particular Poems than from the general importance of the subject. The subject is indeed important! For the human mind is capable of being excited without the application of gross and violent stimulants; and he must have a very faint perception of its beauty and dignity who does not know this, and who does not further know, that one being is elevated above another, in proportion as he possesses this capability. It has therefore appeared to me, that to endeavour to produce or enlarge this capability is one of the best services in which, at any period, a Writer can be engaged; but this service, excellent at all times, is especially so at the present day. For a multitude of causes, unknown to former times, are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and, unfitting it for all voluntary exertion, to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place, and the increasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incident, which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies. To this tendency of life and manners the literature and theatrical exhibitions of the country have conformed themselves. The invaluable works of our elder writers, I had almost said the works of Shakspeare and Milton, are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse.—When I think upon this degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation, I am almost ashamed to have spoken of the feeble endeavour made in these volumes to counteract it; and, reflecting upon the magnitude of the general evil, I should be oppressed with no dishonourable melancholy, had I not a deep impression of certain inherent and indestructible qualities of the human mind, and likewise of certain powers in the great and permanent objects that act upon it, which are equally inherent and indestructible; and were there not added to this impression a belief, that the time is approaching when the evil will be systematically opposed, by men of greater powers, and with far more distinguished success.

Having dwelt thus long on the subjects and aim of these Poems, I shall request the Reader's permission to apprise him of a few circumstances relating to their style, in order, among other reasons, that he may not censure me for not having performed what I never attempted. The Reader will find that personifications of abstract ideas rarely occur in these volumes; and are wisely rejected, as an ordinary device to elevate the style, and raise it above prose. My purpose was to imitate, and, as far as possible, to adopt the very language of men; and assuredly such personifications do not make any natural or regular part of

that language. They are, indeed, a figure of speech occasionally prompted by passion, and I have made use of them as such; but have endeavoured utterly to reject them as a mechanical device of style, or as a family language which Writers in metre seem to lay claim to by prescription. I have wished to keep the Reader in the company of flesh and blood men, by writing as they speak; and shall therefore, I trust, be forgiven for not interfering with their claim, but wish to prefer a claim of my own. There will also be found in these volumes little of what is usually called poetic diction; as much pains have been taken to avoid it as is ordinarily taken to produce it; this has been done for the reason already alleged, to bring my language near to the language of men; and further, because the pleasure of a more natural approach to myself to impart is of a kind very different from that which is supposed to be the proper object of poetry. Without being culpably particular, I do not know how to give my Reader a more exact notion of the style in which it was my wish and intention to write, than by informing him that I have at all times endeavoured to look steadily at my subject; consequently there is I hope in these Poems little falsehood of description, and my ideas are expressed in language fitted to their respective importance. Something must have been gained by this practice, as it is friendly to one property of all good poetry, namely, good sense; but it has necessarily cut me off from a large portion of phrases and figures of speech which from father to son have long been regarded as the common inheritance of Poets. I have also thought it expedient to restrict myself still further, having abstained from the use of many expressions, in themselves proper and beautiful, but which have been foolishly repeated by bad Poets, till such feelings of disgust are connected with them as it is scarcely possible by any art of association to overpower.

If in a poem there should be found a series of lines, or even a single line, in which the language, though naturally arranged, and according to the strict laws of metre, does not differ from that of prose, there is a numerous class of critics, who, when they stumble upon these prosaisms, as they call them, imagine that they have made a notable discovery, and exult over the Poet as over a man ignorant of his own profession. Now these men would establish a canon of criticism which the Reader will conclude he must utterly reject, if he wishes to be pleased with these volumes. And it would be a most easy task to prove to him that not only the language of a large portion of every good poem, even of the most elevated character, must necessarily, except with reference to the metre, in no respect differ from that of good prose, but that some of the most interesting parts of the best poems will be found to be strictly the language of prose when prose is well written. The truth of this assertion might be demonstrated by innumerable passages from almost all the poetical writings, even of Milton himself. To illustrate the subject in a general manner, I will here adduce a short composition of Gray, who was at the head of those who, by their reasonings, have attempted to widen the space of separation betwixt Prose and Metrical composition, and was more than any other man curiously elaborate in the structure of his own poetic diction.

*'In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
And reddening Phoebus lifts his golden fire:
The birds in vain their amorous decant join,*

*Or cheerful swains their merry measure sing.
These ears, alas! for other joys must strive,
That different object does these eyes require;
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire;
Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
And new-born pleasure brings to happier men;
The fields to all their wonted tribute bear;
To warm their little loves the birds complain.
I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,
And weep the more because I weep in vain.'*

It will easily be perceived, that the only part of this Sonnet which is of any value is the lines printed in Italics; it is equally obvious, that, except in the rhyme, and in the use of the single word 'fruitless' for fruitlessly, which is so far a defect, the language of these lines does in no respect differ from that of prose.

By the foregoing quotation it has been shown that the language of Prose may yet be well adapted to Poetry; and it was previously asserted, that a large portion of the language of every good poem can in no respect differ from that of good Prose. We will go further. It may be safely affirmed, that there neither is, nor can be, any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition. We are told of tracing the resemblance between Poetry and Painting, and, accordingly, we call them Sisters; but where shall we find bonds of connection sufficiently strict to typify the affinity betwixt metrical and prose composition? They both speak by and to the same organs; the bodies in which both of them are clothed may be said to be of the same substance, their affections are kindred, and almost identical, not necessarily differing even in degree; Poetry sheds no tears 'such as Angels weep,' but natural and human tears; she can boast of no celestial choir that distinguishes her virtuousness from those of prose; the same human blood circulates through the veins of them both.

It is affirmed that rhyme and metrical arrangement of themselves constitute a distinction which overturns what has just been said; of the strict affinity of metrical language with that of prose, and paves the way for other special distinctions which the mind voluntarily admits. I answer that the language of such Poetry as is here recommended is, as far as is possible, a selection of the language really spoken by men; that this selection, wherever it is made with true taste and feeling, will of itself form a distinction far greater than would at first be imagined, and will entirely separate the composition from the vulgarity and meanness of ordinary life; and, if metre be superadded merely, I believe that a dissimilitude will be produced altogether sufficient for the imagination of a rational mind. What other distinction would we have? Whence is it to come? And where is it to exist? Not, surely, where the Poet speaks through the mouths of his characters; it cannot be necessary here, either for elevation of style, or any of its supposed ornaments; for, if the Poet's subject be judiciously chosen, it will naturally, and upon fit occasion, lead him to passions the lan-

¹ I here use the word 'Poetry' (though against my own judgment) as opposed to the word Prose, and synonymous with metrical composition. But much confusion has been introduced into criticism by this contradistinction of Poetry and Prose, instead of the more philosophical one of Poetry and Matter of Fact, or Science. The only strict antithesis to Prose is Metre; not in this, in truth, a strict antithesis, because lines and passages of metre can naturally occur in writing prose, that it would be scarcely possible to avoid them, even were it desirable.

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guage of which, if selected truly and judiciously, must necessarily be dignified and variegated, and alive with metaphors and figures. I forbear to speak of an incongruity which would shock the intelligent Reader, should the Poet interweave any foreign splendour of his own with that which the passion naturally suggests: it is sufficient to say that such addition is unnecessary. And, surely, it is more probable that those passages, which with propriety abound with metaphors and figures, will have their due effect, if, upon other occasions where the passions are of a milder character, the style also be subdued and temperate.

But, as the pleasure which I hope to give by the Poems now presented to the Reader must depend entirely on just notions upon this subject, and, as it is in itself of high importance to our taste and moral feelings, I cannot content myself with these detached remarks. And if, in what I am about to say, it shall appear to some that my labour is unnecessary, and that I am like a man fighting a battle without enemies, such persons may be reminded, that, whatever be the language outwardly held by men, a practical faith in the opinions which I am wishing to establish is almost unknown. If my conclusions are admitted, and carried as far as they must be carried if admitted at all, our judgments concerning the works of the greatest Poets both ancient and modern will be far different from what they are at present, both when we praise, and when we censure: and our moral feelings influencing and influenced by these judgments will, I believe, be corrected and purified.

Taking up the subject, then, upon general grounds, let me ask, what is meant by the word Poet? What is a Poet? To whom does he address himself? And what language is to be expected from him? He is a man speaking to men; a man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events, than anything which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves:—whence, and from practice, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate external excitement.

But whatever portion of this faculty we may suppose even the greatest Poet to possess, there cannot be a doubt that the language which it will suggest to him, must often, in liveliness and truth, fall short of that which is uttered by men in real life, under the actual pressure of those passions, certain emotions of which the Poet thus produces, or feels to be produced, in himself.

However exalted a notion we would wish to cherish of the character of a Poet, it is obvious,

that while he describes and imitates passions, his employment is in some degree mechanical, compared with the freedom and power of real and substantial action and suffering. So that it will be the wish of the Poet to bring his feelings near to those of the persons whose feelings he describes, nay, for short spaces of time, perhaps, to let himself slip into an entire delusion, and even confound and identify his own feelings with theirs; imitating only the language which is thus suggested to him by a consideration that he describes for a particular purpose, that of giving pleasure. Here, then, he will apply the principle of selection which has been already insisted upon. He will depend upon this for removing what would otherwise be painful or disgusting in the passion; he will feel that there is no necessity to trick out or to elevate nature; and, the more industriously he applies this principle, the deeper will be his faith that no words, which his fancy or imagination can suggest, will be to be compared with those which are the emanations of reality and truth.

But it may be said by those who do not object to the general spirit of these remarks, that, as it is impossible for the Poet to produce upon all occasions language as exquisitely fitted for the passion as that which the real passion itself suggests, it is proper that he should consider himself as in the situation of a translator, who does not scruple to substitute excellencies of another kind for those which are unattainable by him; and endeavours occasionally to surpass his original, in order to make some amends for the general inferiority to which he feels that he must submit. But this would be to encourage idleness and unmanly despair. Further, it is the language of men, who speak of what they do not understand; who talk of Poetry as of a matter of amusement and idle pleasure; who will converse with us as gravely about a taste for Poetry, as they express it, as if it were a thing as indifferent as a taste for ropedancing, or Frontinac or Sherry. Aristotle, I have been told, has said, that Poetry is the most philosophic of all writing: it is so (its object is truth, not individual and local, but general, and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion; truth which is its own testimony, which gives competence and confidence to the tribunal to which it appeals, and receives them from the same tribunal. Poetry is the image of man and nature. The obstacles which stand in the way of the fidelity of the Biographer and Historian, and of their consequent utility, are incalculably greater than those which are to be encountered by the Poet who comprehends the dignity of his art. The Poet writes under one restriction only, namely, the necessity of giving immediate pleasure to a human Being possessed of that information which may be expected from him, not as a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer, or a natural philosopher, but as a Man. Except this one restriction, there is no object standing between the Poet and the image of things; between this, and the Biographer and Historian, there are a thousand.

Nor let this necessity of producing immediate pleasure be considered as a degradation of the Poet's art. It is far otherwise. It is an acknowledgment of the beauty of the universe, an acknowledgment the more sincere, because not formal, but indirect; it is a task light and easy to him who looks at the world in the spirit of love: further, it is a homage paid to the native and undignified dignity of man, to the grand elementary principle of pleasure, by which he knows himself to live.

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and moves. We have no sympathy but what is propagated by pleasure: I would not be misunderstood; but wherever we sympathise with pain, it will be found that the sympathy is produced and carried on by subtle combinations with pleasure. We have no knowledge, that is, no general principles drawn from the contemplation of particular facts, but what has been built up by pleasure, and exists in us by pleasure alone. The Man of science, the Chemist and Mathematician, whatever difficulties and disgusts they may have had to struggle with, know and feel this. However painful may be the objects with which the Anatomist's knowledge is connected, he feels that his knowledge is pleasure; and where he has no pleasure he has no knowledge. What then does the Poet? He considers man and the objects that surround him as acting and re-acting upon each other, so as to produce an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure; he considers man in his own nature and in his ordinary life as contemplating this with a certain quantity of immediate knowledge, with certain convictions, intuitions, and deductions, which from habit acquire the quality of intuitions; he considers him as looking upon this complex scene of ideas and sensations, and finding everywhere objects that immediately excite in him sympathies which, from the necessities of his nature, are accompanied by an over-balance of enjoyment.

To this knowledge which all men carry about with them, and to these sympathies in which, without any other discipline than that of our daily life, we are fitted to take delight, the Poet principally directs his attention. (He considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting properties of nature.) And thus the Poet, prompted by this feeling of pleasure, which accompanies him through the whole course of his studies, converses with general nature, with affections akin to those, which, through labour and length of time, the Man of science has raised up in himself, by conversing with those particular parts of nature which are the objects of his studies. The knowledge both of the Poet and the Man of science is pleasure; but the knowledge of the one cleaves to us as a necessary part of our existence, our natural and unalienable inheritance; the other is a personal and individual acquisition, slow to come to us, and by no habitual and direct sympathy connecting us with our fellow-beings. The Man of science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude: the Poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion. Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science. Emphatically may it be said of the Poet, as Shakspeare hath said of man, 'that he looks before and after.' He is the rock of defence for human nature; an upholder and preserver, carrying everywhere with him relationship and love. In spite of difference of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws and customs: in spite of things silently gone out of mind, and things violently destroyed; the Poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time. The objects of the Poet's thoughts are everywhere; though the eyes and senses of man are, it is true, his favourite guides, yet he will follow wheresoever he can find an atmosphere of sensation in which to move his wings. Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge

—it is as immortal as the heart of man. If the labours of Men of science should ever create any material revolution, direct or indirect, in our condition, and in the impressions which we habitually receive, the Poet will sleep then no more than at present; he will be ready to follow the steps of the Man of science, not only in those general indirect effects, (but he will be at his side, carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of the science itself. The remotest discoveries of the Chemist, the Botanist, or Mineralogist, will be as proper objects of the Poet's art as any upon which it can be employed, if the time should ever come when these things shall be familiar to us, and the relations under which they are contemplated by the followers of these respective sciences shall be manifestly and palpably material to us as enjoying and suffering beings. If the time should ever come when what is now called science, thus familiarised to men, shall be ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood, the Poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration, and will welcome the Being thus produced, as a dear and genuine inmate of the household of man.—It is not, then, to be supposed that any one, who holds that sublime notion of Poetry which I have attempted to convey, will break in upon the sanctity and truth of his pictures by transitory and accidental ornaments, and endeavour to excite admiration of himself by arts, the necessity of which must manifestly depend upon the assumed meanness of his subject.)

What has been thus far said applies to Poetry in general; but especially to those parts of composition where the Poet speaks through the mouths of his characters; and upon this point it appears to authorise the conclusion that there are few persons of good sense, who would not allow that the dramatic parts of composition are defective, in proportion as they deviate from the real language of nature, and are coloured by a diction of the Poet's own, either peculiar to him as an individual Poet or belonging simply to Poets in general; to a body of men who, from the circumstance of their compositions being in metre, it is expected will employ a particular language.

It is not, then, in the dramatic parts of composition that we look for this distinction of language; but still it may be proper and necessary where the Poet speaks to us in his own person and character. To this I answer by referring the Reader to the description before given of a Poet. Among the qualities there enumerated as principally conducing to form a Poet, is implied nothing differing in kind from other men, but only in degree. (The sum of what was said is, that the Poet is chiefly distinguished from other men by a greater promptness to think and feel without immediate external excitement, and a greater power in expressing such thoughts and feelings as are produced in him in that manner.) But these passions and thoughts and feelings are the general passions and thoughts and feelings of men. And with what are they connected? Undoubtedly with our moral sentiments and animal sensations, and with the causes which excite these; with the operations of the elements, and the appearances of the visible universe; with storm and sunshine, with the revolutions of the seasons, with cold and heat, with loss of friends and kindred, with injuries and resentments, gratitude and hope, with fear and sorrow. These, and the like, are the sensations and objects which the Poet describes, as they are the sensations of other men, and the objects which interest them. The Poet thinks and feels in the

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spirit of human passions. How, then, can his language differ in any material degree from that of all other men who feel vividly and see clearly? It might be *proved* that it is impossible. But supposing that this were not the case, the Poet might then be allowed to use a peculiar language when expressing his feelings for his own gratification, or that of men like himself. (But Poets do not write for Poets alone, but for men.) Unless therefore we are advocates for that admiration which subsists upon ignorance, and that pleasure which arises from hearing what we do not understand, the Poet must descend from this supposed height; and, in order to excite rational sympathy, he must express himself as other men express themselves. To this it may be added, that while he is only selecting from the real language of men, or, which amounts to the same thing, composing accurately in the spirit of such selection, he is treading upon safe ground, and we know what we are to expect from him. (Our feelings are the same with respect to metre,) for, as it may be proper to remind the Reader, the distinction of metre is regular and uniform, and not, like that which is produced by what is usually called POETIC DICTION, arbitrary, and subject to infinite caprices upon which no calculation whatever can be made. In the one case, the Reader is utterly at the mercy of the Poet, respecting what imagery or diction he may choose to connect with the passion; whereas, in the other, the metre obeys certain laws, to which the Poet and Reader both willingly submit because they are certain, and because no interference is made by them with the passion, but such as the concurring testimony of ages has shown to heighten and improve the pleasure which co-exists with it.

It will now be proper to answer an obvious question, namely, Why, professing these opinions, have I written in verse? To this, in addition to such answer as is included in what has been already said, I reply, in the first place, Because, however I may have restricted myself, there is still left open to me what confessedly constitutes the most valuable object of all writing, whether in prose or verse; the great and universal passions of men, the most general and interesting of their occupations, and the entire world of nature before me—to supply endless combinations of forms and imagery. Now, supposing for a moment that whatever is interesting in these objects may be as vividly described in prose, why should I be condemned for attempting to superadd to such description the charm which, by the consent of all nations, is acknowledged to exist in metrical language? To this, by such as are yet unconvinced, it may be answered that a very small part of the pleasure given by Poetry depends upon the metre, and that it is injudicious to write in metre, unless it be accompanied with the other artificial distinctions of style with which metre is usually accompanied, and that, by such deviation, more will be lost from the shock which will thereby be given to the Reader's associations than will be counterbalanced by any pleasure which he can derive from the general power of numbers. In answer to those who still contend for the necessity of accompanying metre with certain appropriate colours of style in order to the accomplishment of its appropriate end, and who also, in my opinion, greatly underrate the power of metre in itself, it might, perhaps, as far as relates to these Volumes, have been almost sufficient to observe, that poems are extant, written upon more humble subjects, and in a still more naked and simple style, which have continued to give pleasure from generation to genera-

tion. Now, if nakedness and simplicity be a defect, the fact here mentioned affords a strong presumption that poems somewhat less naked and simple are capable of affording pleasure at the present day; and, what I wished chiefly to attempt, at present, was to justify myself for having written under the impression of this belief.

But various causes might be pointed out why, when the style is manly, and the subject of some importance, words metrically arranged will long continue to impart such a pleasure to mankind as he who proves the extent of that pleasure will be desirous to impart. (The end of Poetry is to produce excitement in co-existence with an overbalance of pleasure,) but, by the supposition, excitement is an unusual and irregular state of the mind; ideas and feelings do not, in that state, succeed each other in accustomed order. If the words, however, by which this excitement is produced be in themselves powerful, or the images and feelings have an undue proportion of pain connected with them, there is some danger that the excitement may be carried beyond its proper bounds. Now the co-presence of something regular, something to which the mind has been accustomed in various moods and in a less excited state, cannot but have great efficacy in tempering and restraining the passion by an intertexture of ordinary feeling, and of feeling not strictly and necessarily connected with the passion. This is unquestionably true; and hence, though the opinion will at first appear paradoxical, from the tendency of metre to divest language, in a certain degree, of its reality, and thus to throw a sort of half-consciousness of unsubstantial existence over the whole composition, there can be little doubt but that more pathetic situations and sentiments, that is, those which have a greater proportion of pain connected with them, may be endured in metrical composition, especially in rhyme, than in prose. The metre of the old ballads is very artless; yet they contain many passages which would illustrate this opinion; and, I hope, if the following Poems be attentively perused, similar instances will be found in them. This opinion may be further illustrated by appealing to the Reader's own experience of the reluctance with which he comes to the re-perusal of the distressful parts of 'Clarissa Harlowe,' or the 'Gamester,' while Shakespeare's writings, in the most pathetic scenes, never act upon us, as pathetic, beyond the bounds of pleasure—an effect which, in a much greater degree than might at first be imagined, is to be ascribed to small, but continual and regular impulses of pleasurable surprise from the metrical arrangement.—On the other hand (what it must be allowed will much more frequently happen) if the Poet's words should be incommensurate with the passion, and inadequate to raise the Reader to a height of desirable excitement, then, (unless the Poet's choice of his metre has been grossly injudicious) in the feelings of pleasure which the Reader has been accustomed to connect with metre in general, and in the feeling, whether cheerful or melancholy, which he has been accustomed to connect with that particular movement of metre, there will be found something which will greatly contribute to impart passion to the words, and to effect the complex end which the Poet proposes to himself.

(If I had undertaken a SYSTEMATIC defence of the theory here maintained, it would have been my duty to develop the various causes upon which the pleasure received from metrical language depends. Among the chief of these causes is to be

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reckoned a principle which must be well known to those who have made any of the Arts the object of accurate reflection; namely, the pleasure which the mind derives from the perception of similitude in dissimilitude. This principle is the great spring of the activity of our minds, and their chief feeder. From this principle the direction of the sexual appetite, and all the passions connected with it, take their origin: it is the life of our ordinary conversation; and upon the accuracy with which similitude in dissimilitude, and dissimilitude in similitude are perceived, depend our taste and our moral feelings. It would not be a useless employment to apply this principle to the consideration of metre, and to show that metre is hence enabled to afford much pleasure, and to point out in what manner that pleasure is produced. But my limits will not permit me to enter upon this subject, and I must content myself with a general summary.

I have said that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity: the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of reaction, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on; but the emotion, of whatever kind, and in whatever degree, from various causes, is qualified by various pleasures, so that in describing any passions whatsoever, which are voluntarily described, the mind will, upon the whole, be in a state of enjoyment. If Nature be thus cautious to preserve in a state of enjoyment a being so employed, the Poet ought to profit by the lesson held forth to him, and ought especially to take care, that, whatever passions he communicates to his Reader, those passions, if his Reader's mind be sound and vigorous, should always be accompanied with an overbalance of pleasure. Now the music of harmonious metrical language, the sense of difficulty overcome, and the blind association of pleasure which has been previously received from works of rhyme or metre of the same or similar construction, an indistinct perception perpetually renewed of language closely resembling that of real life, and yet, in the circumstance of metre, differing from it so widely—all these imperceptibly make up a complex feeling of delight, which is of the most important use in tempering the painful feeling always found intermingled with powerful descriptions of the deeper passions. This effect is always produced in pathetic and impassioned poetry; while, in lighter compositions, the ease and gracefulness with which the Poet manages his numbers are themselves confessedly a principal source of the gratification of the Reader. All that it is necessary to say, however, upon this subject, may be effected by affirming, what few persons will deny, that, of two descriptions, either of passions, manners, or characters, each of them equally well executed, the one in prose and the other in verse, the prose will be read a hundred times where the prose is read once.

Having thus explained a few of my reasons for writing in verse, and why I have chosen subjects from common life, and endeavoured to bring my language near to the real language of men, if I have been too minute in pleading my own cause, I have at the same time been treating a subject of general interest; and for this reason a few words shall be added with reference solely to these particular poems, and to some defects which will

probably be found in them. I am sensible that my associations must have sometimes been particular instead of general, and that, consequently, giving to things a false importance, I may have sometimes written upon unworthy subjects; but I am less apprehensive on this account, than that my language may frequently have suffered from those arbitrary connections of feelings and ideas with particular words and phrases, from which no man can altogether protect himself. Hence I have no doubt, that, in some instances, feelings, even of the ludicrous, may be given to my Readers by expressions which appeared to me tender and pathetic. Such faulty expressions, were I convinced they were faulty at present, and that they must necessarily continue to be so, I would willingly take all reasonable pains to correct. But it is dangerous to make these alterations on the simple authority of a few individuals, or even of certain classes of men; for where the understanding of an Author is not convinced, or his feelings altered, this cannot be done without great injury to himself: for his own feelings are his stay and support; and, if he set them aside in one instance, he may be induced to repeat this act till his mind shall lose all confidence in itself, and become utterly debilitated. To this it may be added, that the critic ought never to forget that he is himself exposed to the same errors as the Poet, and, perhaps, in a much greater degree: for there can be no presumption in saying of most readers, that it is not probable they will be so well acquainted with the various stages of meaning through which words have passed, or with the fickleness or stability of the relations of particular ideas to each other; and, above all, since they are so much less interested in the subject, they may decide lightly and carelessly.

Long as the Reader has been detained, I hope he will permit me to caution him against a mode of false criticism which has been applied to Poetry, in which the language closely resembles that of life and nature. Such verses have been triumphed over in parodies, of which Dr. Johnson's stanza is a fair specimen:—

'I put my hat upon my head
And walked into the Strand,
And there I met another man
Whose hat was in his hand.'

Immediately under these lines let us place one of the most justly-admired stanzas of the 'Babes in the Wood.'

'These pretty Babes with hand in hand
Went wandering up and down;
But never more they saw the Man
Approaching from the Town.'

In both these stanzas the words, and the order of the words, in no respect differ from the most unimpassioned conversation. There are words in both, for example, 'the Strand,' and 'the Town,' connected with none but the most familiar ideas; yet the one stanza we admit as admirable, and the other as a fair example of the superlatively contemptible. Whence arises this difference? Not from the metre, not from the language, not from the order of the words; but the matter expressed in Dr. Johnson's stanza is contemptible. The proper method of treating trivial and simple verses, to which Dr. Johnson's stanza would be a fair parallelism, is not to say, this is a bad kind of poetry, or, this is not poetry; but, this wants sense; it is neither interesting in itself, nor can lead to anything interesting; the images neither originate in that sane state of feeling which arises out of thought, nor can excite thought or feeling in the

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Reader. This is the only sensible manner of dealing with such verses. Why trouble yourself about the species till you have previously decided upon the genus? Why take pains to prove that an ape is not a Newton, when it is self-evident that he is not a man?

One request I must make of my reader, which is, that in judging these Poems he would decide by his own feelings genuinely, and not by reflection upon what will probably be the judgment of others. How common is it to hear a person say, I myself do not object to this style of composition, or this or that expression, but, to such and such classes of people it will appear mean or ludicrous! This mode of criticism, so destructive of all sound unadulterated judgment, is almost universal: let the Reader then abide, independently, by his own feelings, and, if he finds himself affected, let him not suffer such conjectures to interfere with his pleasure.

If an Author, by any single composition, has impressed us with respect for his talents, it is useful to consider this as affording a presumption, that on other occasions where we have been displeased, he, nevertheless, may not have written ill or absurdly; and further, to give him so much credit for this one composition as may induce us to review what has displeased us, with more care than we should otherwise have bestowed upon it. This is not only an act of justice, but, in our decisions upon poetry especially, may conduce, in a high degree, to the improvement of our own taste; for an accurate taste in poetry, and in all the other arts, as Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed, is an *acquired* talent, which can only be produced by thought and a long-continued intercourse with the best models of composition. This is mentioned, not with so ridiculous a purpose as to prevent the most inexperienced Reader from judging for himself, (I have already said that I wish him to judge for himself); but merely to temper the rashness of decision, and to suggest, that, if Poetry be a subject on which much time has not been bestowed, the judgment may be erroneous; and that, in many cases, it necessarily will be so.

Nothing would, I know, have so effectually contributed to further the end which I have in view, as to have shown of what kind the pleasure is, and how that pleasure is produced, which is confessedly

produced by metrical composition essentially different from that which I have here endeavoured to recommend: for the Reader will say that he has been pleased by such composition; and what more can be done for him? The power of any art is limited; and he will suspect, that, if it be proposed to furnish him with new friends, that can be only upon condition of his abandoning his old friends. Besides, as I have said, the Reader is himself conscious of the pleasure which he has received from such composition, composition to which he has peculiarly attached the endearing name of Poetry; and all men feel an habitual gratitude, and something of an honourable bigotry, for the objects which have long continued to please them: we not only wish to be pleased, but to be pleased in that particular way in which we have been accustomed to be pleased. There is in these feelings enough to resist a host of arguments; and I should be the less able to combat them successfully, as I am willing to allow, that, in order entirely to enjoy the Poetry which I am recommending, it would be necessary to give up much of what is ordinarily enjoyed. But, would my limits have permitted me to point out how this pleasure is produced, many obstacles might have been removed, and the Reader assisted in perceiving that the powers of language are not so limited as he may suppose; and that it is possible for poetry to give other enjoyments, of a purer, more lasting, and more exquisite nature. This part of the subject has not been altogether neglected, but it has not been so much my present aim to prove, that the interest excited by some other kinds of poetry is less vivid, and less worthy of the nobler powers of the mind as to offer reasons for presuming, that if my purpose were fulfilled, a species of poetry would be produced, which is genuine poetry; in its nature well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and likewise important in the multiplicity and quality of its moral relations.

From what has been said, and from a perusal of the Poems, the Reader will be able clearly to perceive the object which I had in view: he will determine how far it has been attained; and, what is a much more important question, whether it be worth attaining; and upon the decision of these two questions will rest my claim to the approbation of the Public.

APPENDIX

See page 739—"by what is usually called POETIC Diction."

PERHAPS, as I have no right to expect that attentive perusal, without which, confined, as I have been, to the narrow limits of a preface, my meaning cannot be thoroughly understood, I am anxious to give an exact notion of the sense in which the phrase poetic diction has been used; and for this purpose, a few words shall here be added, concerning the origin and characteristics of the phraseology, which I have condemned under that name.

The earliest poets of all nations generally wrote from passion excited by real events; they wrote naturally, and as men: feeling powerfully as they did, their language was daring, and figurative. In succeeding times, Poets, and Men ambitious of the fame of Poets, perceiving the influence of such language, and desirous of producing the same effect without being animated by the same passion, set themselves to a mechanical adoption of these

figures of speech, and made use of them, sometimes with propriety, but much more frequently applied them to feelings and thoughts with which they had no natural connection whatsoever. A language was thus insensibly produced, differing materially from the real language of men in *any* situation. The Reader or Hearer of this distorted language found himself in a perturbed and unusual state of mind: when affected by the genuine language of passion he had been in a perturbed and unusual state of mind also: in both cases he was willing that his common judgment and understanding should be laid asleep, and he had no instinctive and infallible perception of the true to make him reject the false; the one served as a passport for the other. The emotion was in both cases delightful, and no wonder if he confounded the one with the other, and believed them both to be produced by the same, or similar causes.

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Besides, the Poet spake to him in the character of a man to be looked up to, a man of genius and authority. Thus, and from a variety of other causes, this distorted language was received with admiration; and Poets, it is probable, who had before contented themselves for the most part with misapplying only expressions which at first had been dictated by real passion, carried the abuse still further, and introduced phrases composed apparently in the spirit of the original figurative language of passion, yet altogether of their own invention, and characterised by various degrees of wanton deviation from good sense and nature.

It is indeed true, that the language of the earliest Poets was felt to differ materially from ordinary language, because it was the language of extraordinary occasions; but it was really spoken by men, language which the Poet himself had uttered when he had been affected by the events which he described, or which he had heard uttered by those around him. To this language it is probable that metre of some sort or other was early superadded. This separated the genuine language of Poetry still further from common life, so that whoever read or heard the poems of these earliest Poets felt himself moved in a way in which he had not been accustomed to be moved in real life, and by causes manifestly different from those which acted upon him in real life. This was the great temptation to all the corruptions which have followed: under the protection of this feeling succeeding Poets constructed a phraseology which had one thing, it is true, in common with the genuine language of poetry, namely, that it was not heard in ordinary conversation; that it was unusual. But the first Poets, as I have said, spake a language which, though unusual, was still the language of men. This circumstance, however, was disregarded by their successors; they found that they could please by easier means: they became proud of modes of expression which they themselves had invented, and which were uttered only by themselves. In process of time metre became a symbol or promise of this unusual language, and whoever took upon him to write in metre, according as he possessed more or less of true poetic genius, introduced less or more of this adulterated phraseology into his compositions, and the true and the false were inseparably interwoven until, the taste of men becoming gradually perverted, this language was received as a natural language: and at length, by the influence of books upon men, did to a certain degree really become so. Abuses of this kind were imported from one nation to another, and with the progress of refinement this diction became daily more and more corrupt, thrusting out of sight the plain humanities of nature by a motley masquerade of tricks, quaintnesses, hieroglyphics, and enigmas.

It would not be uninteresting to point out the causes of the pleasure given by this extravagant and absurd diction. It depends upon a great variety of causes, but upon none, perhaps, more than its influence in impressing a notion of the peculiarity and exaltation of the Poet's character, and in flattering the Reader's self-love by bringing him nearer to a sympathy with that character; an effect which is accomplished by unsettling ordinary habits of thinking, and thus assisting the Reader to approach to that perturbed and dizzy state of mind in which if he does not find himself, he imagines that he is basking of a peculiar enjoyment which poetry can and ought to bestow.

The sonnet quoted from Gray, in the Preface, except the lines printed in Italics, consists of little

else but this diction, though not of the worst kind; and indeed, if one may be permitted to say so, it is far too common in the best writers both ancient and modern. Perhaps in no way, by positive example, could more easily be given a notion of what I mean by the phrase *poetic diction* than by referring to a comparison between the metrical paraphrase which we have of passages in the Old and New Testament, and those passages as they exist in our common Translation. See Pope's 'Messiah' throughout; Prior's 'Did sweeter sounds adorn my flowing tongue,' &c. &c. 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels,' &c. &c. 1st Corinthians, chap. xiii. By way of immediate example take the following of Dr. Johnson:—

'Turn on the prudent Ant thy heedless eyes,
Observe her labours, Sluggard, and be wise;
No stern command, no monitory voice,
Prescribes her duties, or directs her choice;
Yet, timely provident, she hastens away
To snatch the blessings of a piteous day;
When fruitful Summer loads the teeming plain,
She crops the harvest, and she stores the grain.
How long shall sloth usurp thy useless hours,
Unnerve thy vigour, and enchain thy powers?
While artful shades thy downy couch enclose,
And soft solicitation courts repose,
Amidst the drowsy charms of dull delight,
Year chases year with unremitted flight,
Till Want now following, fraudulent and slow,
Shall spring to seize thee, like an ambush'd foe.'

From this hubbub of words pass to the original. 'Go to the Ant, thou Sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O Sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.' Proverbs, chap. vi.

One more quotation, and I have done. It is from Cowper's Verses supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk:—

'Religion! what treasure untold
Resides in that heavenly word!
More precious than silver and gold,
Or all that this earth can afford,
But the sound of the church-going bell
These valleys and rocks never heard,
Ne'er sighed at the sound of a knell,
Or smiled when a sabbath appeared.

'Ye winds, that have made me your sport
Convey to this desolate shore
Some cordial endearing report
Of a land I must visit no more.
My Friends, do they now and then send
A wish or a thought after me?
O tell me I yet have a friend,
Though a friend I am never to see.'

This passage is quoted as an instance of three different styles of composition. The first four lines are poorly expressed; some Critics would call the language prosaic; the fact is, it would be bad prose, so bad, that it is scarcely worse in metre. The epithet 'church-going' applied to a bell, and that by so chaste a writer as Cowper, is an instance of the strange abuses which Poets have introduced into their language, till they and their Readers take them as matters of course, if they do not single them out expressly as objects of admiration. The two lines 'Ne'er sighed at the sound,' &c., are, in my opinion, an instance of the language of passion wrested from its proper use, and, from the mere

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circumstance of the composition being in metre, applied upon an occasion that does not justify such violent expressions; and I should condemn the passage, though perhaps few Readers will agree with me, as vicious poetic diction. The last stanza is throughout admirably expressed: it would be equally good whether in prose or verse, except that the Reader has an exquisite pleasure in seeing such natural language so naturally connected with metre. The beauty of this stanza tempts me to conclude with a principle which ought never to be

lost sight of, and which has been my chief guide in all I have said,—namely, that in works of *Imagination and sentiment*, for of these only have I been treating, in proportion as ideas and feelings are valuable, whether the composition be in prose or in verse, they require and exact one and the same language. Metre is but adventitious to composition, and the phraseology for which that passport is necessary, even where it may be graceful at all, will be little valued by the judicious.

ESSAY, SUPPLEMENTARY TO THE PREFACE

WITH the young of both sexes. Poetry is, like love, a passion; but, for much the greater part of those who have been proud of its power over their minds, a necessity soon arises of breaking the pleasing bondage; or it relaxes of itself;—the thoughts being occupied in domestic cares, or the time engrossed by business. Poetry then becomes only an occasional recreation; while to those whose existence passes away in a course of fashionable pleasure, it is a species of luxurious amusement. In middle and declining age, a scattered number of serious persons resort to poetry, as to religion, for a protection against the pressure of trivial employments, and as a consolation for the afflictions of life. And, lastly, there are many, who, having been enamoured of this art in their youth, have found leisure, after youth was spent, to cultivate general literature: in which poetry has continued to be comprehended as a study.

Into the above classes the Readers of poetry may be divided; Critics abound in them all; but from the last only can opinions be collected of absolute value, and worthy to be depended upon, as prophetic of the destiny of a new work. The young, who in nothing can escape delusion, are especially subject to it in their intercourse with Poetry. The cause, not so obvious as the fact is unquestionable, is the same as that from which erroneous judgments in this art, in the minds of men of all ages, chiefly proceed; but upon Youth it operates with peculiar force. The appropriate business of poetry, (which, nevertheless, if genuine, is as permanent as pure science,) her appropriate employment, her privilege and her duty, is to treat of things not as they *are*, but as they *appear*; not as they exist in themselves, but as they *seem* to exist to the *senses*, and to the *passions*. What a world of delusion does this acknowledged obligation prepare for the inexperienced! what temptations to go astray are here held forth for them whose thoughts have been little disciplined by the understanding, and whose feelings revolt from the sway of reason!—When a juvenile Reader is in the height of his rapture with some vicious passage, should experience throw in doubts, or common-sense suggest suspicions, a lurking consciousness that the realities of the Muse are but shows, and that her liveliest excitements are raised by transient shocks of conflicting feeling and successive assemblages of contradictory thoughts—is ever at hand to justify extravagance, and to sanction absurdity. But, it may be asked, as these illusions are unavoidable, and, no doubt, eminently useful to the mind as a process, what good can be gained by making observations, the tendency of which is to diminish the confidence of youth in its feelings, and thus to abridge its innocent and even profitable pleasures? The reproach implied in the question could not be warded off, if Youth were incapable

of being delighted with what is truly excellent; or, if these errors always terminated of themselves in due season. But, with the majority, though their force be abated, they continue through life. Moreover, the fire of youth is too vivacious an element to be extinguished or damped by a philosophical remark; and, while there is no danger that what has been said will be injurious or painful to the ardent and the confident, it may prove beneficial to those who, being enthusiastic, are, at the same time, modest and ingenuous. The intimation may unite with their own misgivings to regulate their sensibility, and to bring in, sooner than it would otherwise have arrived, a more discreet and sound judgment.

If it should excite wonder that men of ability, in later life, whose understandings have been rendered acute by practice in affairs, should be so easily and so far imposed upon when they happen to take up a new work in verse, this appears to be the cause;—that, having discontinued their attention to poetry, whatever progress may have been made in other departments of knowledge, they have not, as to this art, advanced in true discernment beyond the age of youth. If, then, a new poem fall in their way, whose attractions are of that kind which would have enraptured them during the heat of youth, the judgment not being improved to a degree that they shall be disgusted, they are dazzled; and prize and cherish the faults for having had power to make the present time vanish before them, and to throw the mind back, as by enchantment, into the happiest season of life. As they read, powers seem to be revived, passions are regenerated, and pleasures restored. The Book was probably taken up after an escape from the burden of business, and with a wish to forget the world, and all its vexations and anxieties. Having obtained this wish, and so much more, it is natural that they should make report as they have felt.

If Men of mature age, through want of practice, be thus easily beguiled into admiration of absurdities, extravagances, and misplaced ornaments, thinking it proper that their understandings should enjoy a holiday, while they are unbending their minds with verse, it may be expected that such Readers will resemble their former selves also in strength of prejudice, and an inaptitude to be moved by the unostentatious beauties of a pure style. In the higher poetry, an enlightened Critic chiefly looks for a reflection of the wisdom of the heart and the grandeur of the imagination. Wherever these appear, simplicity accompanies them; Magnificence herself, when legitimate, depending upon a simplicity of her own, to regulate her ornaments. But it is a well-known property of human nature, that our estimates are ever governed by comparisons, of which we are conscious with

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various degrees of distinctness. Is it not, then, inevitable (confining these observations to the effects of style merely) that an eye, accustomed to the glaring hues of diction by which such Readers are caught and excited, will for the most part be rather repelled than attracted by an original Work, the colouring of which is disposed according to a pure and refined scheme of harmony? It is in the fine arts as in the affairs of life, no man can serve (*i.e.* obey with zeal and fidelity) two Masters.

As Poetry is most just to its own divine origin when it administers the comforts and breathes the spirit of religion, they who have learned to perceive this truth, and who betake themselves to reading verse for sacred purposes, must be preserved from numerous illusions to which the two Classes of Readers, whom we have been considering, are liable. But, as the mind grows serious from the weight of life, the range of its passions is contracted accordingly; and its sympathies become so exclusive, that many species of high excellence wholly escape, or but languidly excite, its notice. Besides, men who read from religious or moral inclinations, even when the subject is of that kind which they approve, are beset with misconceptions and mistakes peculiar to themselves. Attaching so much importance to the truths which interest them, they are prone to overrate the Authors by whom those truths are expressed and enforced. They come prepared to impart so much passion to the Poet's language, that they remain unconscious how little, in fact, they receive from it. And, on the other hand, religious faith is to him who holds it so momentous a thing, and error appears to be attended with such tremendous consequences, that, if opinions touching upon religion occur which the Reader condemns, he not only cannot sympathise with them, however animated the expression, but there is, for the most part, an end put to all satisfaction and enjoyment. Love, if it before existed, is converted into dislike; and the heart of the Reader is set against the Author and his book.—To these excesses, they, who from their professions ought to be the most guarded against them, are perhaps the most liable; I mean those sects whose religion, being from the calculating understanding, is cold and formal. For when Christianity, the religion of humility, is founded upon the proudest faculty of our nature, what can be expected but contradictions? Accordingly, believers of this cast are at one time contemptuous; at another, being troubled, as they are and must be, with inward misgivings, they are jealous and suspicious;—and at all seasons, they are under temptation to supply by the heat with which they defend their tenets, the animation which is wanting to the constitution of the religion itself.

Faith was given to man that his affections, detached from the treasures of time, might be inclined to settle upon those of eternity;—the elevation of his nature, which this habit produces on earth, being to him a presumptive evidence of a future state of existence; and giving him a title to partake of its holiness. The religious man values what he sees chiefly as an 'imperfect shadowing forth' of what he is incapable of seeing. The concerns of religion refer to indefinite objects, and are too weighty for the mind to support them without relieving itself by resting a great part of the burthen upon words and symbols. The commerce between Man and his Maker cannot be carried on but by a process where much is represented in little, and the Infinite Being accommodates himself to a finite capacity. In all this may be perceived the affinity

between religion and poetry; between religion—making up the deficiencies of reason by faith; and poetry—passionate for the instruction of reason; between religion—whose element is infinitude, and whose ultimate trust is the supreme of things, submitting herself to circumscription, and reconciled to substitutions; and poetry—ethereal and transcendent, yet incapable to sustain her existence without sensuous incarnation. In this community of nature may be perceived also the lurking incitements of kindred error;—so that we shall find that no poetry has been more subject to distortion, than that species, the argument and scope of which is religious; and no lovers of the art have gone farther astray than the pious and the devout.

Whither then shall we turn for that union of qualifications which must necessarily exist before the decisions of a critic can be of absolute value? For a mind at once poetical and philosophical; for a critic whose affections are as free and kindly as the spirit of society, and whose understanding is severe as that of dispassionate government? Where are we to look for that initiatory composure of mind which no selfishness can disturb? For a natural sensibility that has been tutored into correctness without losing anything of its quickness; and for active faculties, capable of answering the demands which an Author of original imagination shall make upon them, associated with a judgment that cannot be duped into admiration by aught that is unworthy of it?—among those and those only, who, never having suffered their youthful love of poetry to remit much of its force, have applied to the consideration of the laws of this art the best power of their understandings. At the same time it must be observed—that, as this Class comprehends the only judgments which are trust-worthy, so does it include the most erroneous and perverse. For to be mistaught is worse than to be untaught; and no perverseness equals that which is supported by system, no errors are so difficult to root out as those which the understanding has pledged its credit to uphold. In this Class are contained censors, who, if they be pleased with what is good, are pleased with it only by imperfect glimpses, and upon false principles; who, should they generalise rightly, to a certain point, are sure to suffer for it in the end; who, if they stumble upon a sound rule, are fettered by misapplying it, or by straining it too far; being incapable of perceiving when it ought to yield to one of higher order. In it are found critics too petulant to be passive to a genuine poet, and too feeble to grapple with him; men, who take upon them to report of the course which *he* holds whom they are utterly unable to accompany,—confounded if he turn quick upon the wing, dismayed if he soar steadily 'into the region';—men of palsied imaginations and indurated hearts; in whose minds all healthy action is languid, who therefore feed as the many direct them, or, with the many, are greedy after vicious provocatives;—judges, whose censure is auspicious, and whose praise ominous! In this class meet together the two extremes of best and worst.

The observations presented in the foregoing series are of too ungracious a nature to have been made without reluctance; and, were it only on this account, I would invite the reader to try them by the test of comprehensive experience. If the number of judges who can be confidently relied upon be in reality so small, it ought to follow that partial notice only, or neglect, perhaps long continued, or attention wholly inadequate to their merits—must have been the fate of most works in the

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higher departments of poetry; and that, on the other hand, numerous productions have blazed into popularity, and have passed away, leaving scarcely a trace behind them: it will be further found, that when Authors shall have at length raised themselves into general admiration and maintained their ground, errors and prejudices have prevailed concerning their genius and their works, which the few who are conscious of those errors and prejudices would deplore; if they were not recompensed by perceiving that there are select Spirits for whom it is ordained that their fame shall be in the world an existence like that of Virtue, which owes its being to the struggles it makes, and its vigour to the enemies whom it provokes,—a vivacious quality, ever doomed to meet with opposition, and still triumphing over it; and, from the nature of its dominion, incapable of being brought to the sad conclusion of Alexander, when he wept that there were no more worlds for him to conquer.

Let us take a hasty retrospect of the poetical literature of this Country for the greater part of the last two centuries, and see if the facts support these inferences.

Who is there that now reads the 'Creation' of Dubartas? Yet all Europe once resounded with his praise; he was caressed by kings; and, when his Poem was translated into our language, the 'Faery Queen' faded before it. The name of Spenser, whose genius is of a higher order than even that of Ariosto, is at this day scarcely known beyond the limits of the British Isles. And if the value of his works is to be estimated from the attention now paid to them by his countrymen, compared with that which they bestow on those of some other writers, it must be pronounced small indeed.

'The laurel, meed of mighty conquerors
And poets sage'—

are his own words; but his wisdom has, in this particular, been his worst enemy: while its opposite, whether in the shape of folly or madness, has been their best friend. But he was a great power, and bears a high name: the laurel has been awarded to him.

A dramatic Author, if he write for the stage, must adapt himself to the taste of the audience, or they will not endure him; accordingly the mighty genius of Shakspeare was listened to. The people were delighted; but I am not sufficiently versed in stage antiquities to determine whether they did not flock as eagerly to the representation of many pieces of contemporary Authors, wholly undeserving to appear upon the same boards. Had there been a formal contest for superiority among dramatic writers, that Shakspeare, like his predecessors Sophocles and Euripides, would have often been subject to the mortification of seeing the prize adjudged to sorry competitors, becomes too probable, when we reflect that the admirers of Settle and Shadwell were, in a later age, as numerous, and reckoned as respectable in point of talent, as those of Dryden. At all events, that Shakspeare stooped to accommodate himself to the People, is sufficiently apparent; and one of the most striking proofs of his almost omnipotent genius, is, that he could turn to such glorious purpose those materials which the prepossessions of the age compelled him to make use of. Yet even this marvellous skill appears not to have been enough to prevent his rivals from having some advantage over him in public estimation; else how can we account for passages and scenes that exist in his works, unless

upon a supposition that some of the grossest of them, a fact which in my own mind I have no doubt of, were foisted in by the Players, for the gratification of the many?

But that his Works, whatever might be their reception upon the stage, made but little impression upon the ruling Intellectuals of the time, may be inferred from the fact that Lord Bacon, in his multifarious writings, nowhere either quotes or alludes to him¹. His dramatic excellence enabled him to resume possession of the stage after the Restoration; but Dryden tells us that in his time two of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher were acted for one of Shakspeare's. And so faint and limited was the perception of the poetic beauties of his dramas in the time of Pope, that, in his Edition of the Plays, with a view of rendering to the general reader a necessary service, he printed between inverted commas those passages which he thought most worthy of notice.

At this day, the French Critics have abated nothing of their aversion to this darling of our Nation: 'the English, with their bouffon de Shakspeare,' is as familiar an expression among them as in the time of Voltaire. Baron Grimm is the only French writer who seems to have perceived his infinite superiority to the first names of the French Theatre; an advantage which the Parisian Critic owed to his German blood and German education. The most enlightened Italians, though well acquainted with our language, are wholly incompetent to measure the proportions of Shakspeare. The Germans only, of foreign nations, are approaching towards a knowledge and feeling of what he is. In some respects they have acquired a superiority over the fellow-countrymen of the Poet: for among us it is a current, I might say, an established opinion, that Shakspeare is justly praised when he is pronounced to be 'a wild irregular genius, in whom great faults are compensated by great beauties.' How long may it be before this misconception passes away, and it becomes universally acknowledged that the judgment of Shakspeare in the selection of his materials, and in the manner in which he has made them, heterogeneous as they often are, constitute a unity of their own, and contribute all to one great end, is not less admirable than his imagination, his invention, and his intuitive knowledge of human Nature?

There is extant a small Volume of miscellaneous poems, in which Shakspeare expresses his own feelings in his own person. It is not difficult to conceive that the Editor, George Stevens, should have been insensible to the beauties of one portion of that Volume, the Sonnets; though in no part of the writings of this Poet is found, in an equal compass, a greater number of exquisite feelings felicitously expressed. But, from regard to the Critic's own credit, he would not have ventured to talk of an act of parliament not being strong

¹ The learned Hakewill (a third edition of whose book bears date 1635), writing to refute the error 'touching Nature's perpetual and universal decay,' cites triumphantly the names of Ariosto, Tasso, Bartas, and Spenser, as instances that poetic genius had not degenerated; but he makes no mention of Shakspeare.

² This flippant insensibility was publicly reprobated by Mr. Coleridge in a course of Lectures upon Poetry given by him at the Royal Institution. For the various merits of thought and language in Shakspeare's Sonnets, see Numbers, 27, 29, 30, 32, 33, 54, 64, 66, 68, 73, 76, 86, 91, 92, 93, 97, 98, 103, 107, 108, 109, 111, 113, 114, 116, 117, 129, and many others.

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enough to compel the perusal of those little pieces, if he had not known that the people of England were ignorant of the treasures contained in them: and if he had not, moreover, shared the too common propensity of human nature to exult over a supposed fall into the mire of a genius whom he had been compelled to regard with admiration, as an inmate of the celestial regions—there sitting where he durst not soar.¹

Nine years before the death of Shakspeare, Milton was born; and early in life he published several small poems, which, though on their first appearance they were praised by a few of the judicious, were afterwards neglected to that degree, that Pope in his youth could borrow from them without risk of its being known. Whether these poems are at this day justly appreciated, I will not undertake to decide: nor would it imply a severe reflection upon the mass of readers to suppose the contrary; seeing that a man of the acknowledged genius of Voss, the German poet, could suffer their spirit to evaporate; and could change their character, as is done in the translation made by him of the most popular of those pieces. At all events, it is certain that these Poems of Milton are now much read, and loudly praised; yet were they little heard of till more than 150 years after their publication; and of the Sonnets, Dr. Johnson, as appears from Boswell's Life of him, was in the habit of thinking and speaking as contemptuously as Steevens wrote upon those of Shakspeare.

About the time when the Pindaric odes of Cowley and his imitators, and the productions of that class of curious thinkers whom Dr. Johnson has strangely styled metaphysical Poets, were beginning to lose something of that extravagant admiration which they had excited, the 'Paradise Lost' made its appearance. 'Fit audience find though few,' was the petition addressed by the Poet to his inspiring Muse, I have said elsewhere that he gained more than he asked; this I believe to be true; but Dr. Johnson has fallen into a gross mistake when he attempts to prove, by the sale of the work, that Milton's Countrymen were 'just to it' upon its first appearance. Thirteen hundred Copies were sold in two years; an uncommon example, he asserts, of the prevalence of genius in opposition to so much recent enmity as Milton's public conduct had excited. But, be it remembered that, if Milton's political and religious opinions, and the manner in which he announced them, had raised him many enemies, they had procured him numerous friends; who, as all personal danger was passed away at the time of publication, would be eager to procure the master-work of a man whom they revered, and whom they would be proud of praising. Take, from the number of purchasers, persons of this class, and also those who wished to possess the Poem as a religious work, and but few I fear would be left who sought for it on account of its poetical merits. The demand did not immediately increase; 'for,' says Dr. Johnson, 'many more readers' (he means persons in the habit of reading poetry) 'than were supplied at first the Nation did not afford.' How careless must a writer be who can make this assertion in the face of so many existing title-pages to belie it! Turning to my own shelves, I find the folio of Cowley, seventh edition 1681. A book near it is Flatman's Poems, fourth edition, 1686; Waller, fifth edition, same date. The Poems of Norris of Bemerton not long after went, I believe, through nine editions. What further demand there might be for these works I do not know; but I well remember, that,

twenty-five years ago, the booksellers' stalls in London swarmed with the folios of Cowley. This is not mentioned in disparagement of that able writer and amiable man; but merely to show—that, if Milton's work were not more read, it was not because readers did not exist at the time. The early editions of the 'Paradise Lost' were printed in a shape which allowed them to be sold at a low price, yet only three thousand copies of the Work were sold in eleven years; and the Nation, says Dr. Johnson, had been satisfied from 1623 to 1664, that is, forty-one years, with only two editions of the Works of Shakspeare; which probably did not together make one thousand Copies; facts adduced by the critic to prove the 'paucity of Readers.'—There were readers in multitudes; but their money went for other purposes, as their admiration was fixed elsewhere. We are authorised, then, to affirm, that the reception of the 'Paradise Lost,' and the slow progress of its fame, are proofs as striking as can be desired that the positions which I am attempting to establish are not erroneous'.—How amusing to shape to one's self such a critique as a Wit of Charles's days, or a Lord of the Miscellanies or trading Journalist of King William's time, would have brought forth, if he had set his faculties industriously to work upon this Poem, everywhere impregnated with original excellence.

So strange indeed are the obliquities of admiration, that they whose opinions are much influenced by authority will often be tempted to think that there are no fixed principles² in human nature for this art to rest upon. I have been honoured by being permitted to peruse in MS. a tract composed between the period of the Revolution and the close of that century. It is the Work of an English Peer of high accomplishments, its object to form the character and direct the studies of his son. Perhaps nowhere does a more beautiful treatise of the kind exist. The good sense and wisdom of the thoughts, the delicacy of the feelings, and the charm of the style, are, throughout, equally conspicuous. Yet the Author, selecting among the Poets of his own country those whom he deems most worthy of his son's perusal, particularises only Lord Rochester, Sir John Denham, and Cowley. Writing about the same time, Shaftesbury, an author at present unjustly depreciated, describes the English Muses as only yet lisping in their cradles.

The arts by which Pope, soon afterwards, contrived to procure to himself a more general and a higher reputation than perhaps any English Poet ever attained during his life-time, are known to the judicious. And as well known is it to them, that the undue exertion of those arts is the cause why Pope has for some time held a rank in literature, to which, if he had not been seduced by an over-love of immediate popularity, and had confided more in his native genius, he never could have descended. He bewitched the nation by his melody, and dazzled it by his polished style, and was himself blinded by his own success. Having wandered from humanity in his Eclogues with

¹ Hughes is express upon this subject: in his dedication of Spenser's Works to Lord Somers, he writes thus: 'It was your Lordship's encouraging a beautiful edition of "Paradise Lost" that first brought that incomparable Poem to be generally known and esteemed.'

² This opinion seems actually to have been entertained by Adam Smith, the worst critic, David Hume not excepted, that Scotland, a soil to which this sort of weed seems natural, has produced.

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boyish inexperience, the praise, which these compositions obtained, tempted him into a belief that Nature was not to be trusted, at least in pastoral Poetry. To prove this by example, he put his friend Gay upon writing those Eclogues which their author intended to be burlesque. The instigator of the work, and his admirers, could perceive in them nothing but what was ridiculous. Nevertheless, though these Poems contain some detestable passages, the effect, as Dr. Johnson well observes, 'of reality and truth became conspicuous even when the intention was to show them grovelling and degraded.' The Pastorals, ludicrous to such as prided themselves upon their refinement, in spite of those disgusting passages, 'became popular, and were read with delight, as just representations of rural manners and occupations.'

Something less than sixty years after the publication of the 'Paradise Lost' appeared Thomson's 'Winter,' which was speedily followed by his other Seasons. It is a work of inspiration; much of it is written from himself, and nobly from himself. How was it received? 'It was no sooner read,' says one of his contemporary biographers, 'than universally admired: those only excepted who had not been used to feel, or to look for anything in poetry, beyond a point of satirical or epigrammatic wit, a smart *antithesis* richly trimmed with rhyme, or the softness of an *elegiac* complaint. To such his manly classical spirit could not readily commend itself; till, after a more attentive perusal, they had got the better of their prejudices, and either acquired or affected a truer taste. A few others stood aloof, merely because they had long before fixed the articles of their poetical creed, and resigned themselves to an absolute despair of ever seeing anything new and original. These were somewhat mortified to find their notions disturbed by the appearance of a poet, who seemed to owe nothing but to nature and his own genius. But, in a short time, the applause became unanimous; every one wondering how so many pictures, and pictures so familiar, should have moved them but faintly to what they felt in his descriptions. His digressions too, the overflowings of a tender benevolent heart, charmed the reader no less; leaving him in doubt, whether he should more admire the Poet or love the Man.'

This case appears to bear strongly against us:—but we must distinguish between wonder and legitimate admiration. The subject of the work is the changes produced in the appearances of nature by the revolution of the year: and, by undertaking to write in verse, Thomson pledged himself to treat his subject as became a Poet. Now, it is remarkable that, excepting the nocturnal Reverie of Lady Winchelsea, and a passage or two in the 'Windsor Forest' of Pope, the poetry of the period intervening between the publication of the 'Paradise Lost' and the 'Seasons' does not contain a single new image of external nature; and scarcely presents a familiar one from which it can be inferred that the eye of the Poet had been steadily fixed upon his object, much less that his feelings had urged him to work upon it in the spirit of genuine imagination. To what a low state knowledge of the most obvious and important phenomena had sunk, is evident from the style in which Dryden has executed a description of Night in one of his Tragedies, and Pope his translation of the celebrated moonlight scene in the 'Iliad.' A blind man, in the habit of attending accurately to descriptions casually dropped from the lips of those around him, might easily depict these appearances with more truth. Dryden's lines are vague, bombastic, and senseless; those of Pope, though he had Homer to guide him, are throughout false and contradictory. The verses of Dryden, once highly celebrated, are forgotten; those of Pope still retain their hold upon public estimation,—nay, there is not a passage of descriptive poetry, which at this day finds so many and such ardent admirers. Strange to think of an enthusiast, as may have been the case with thousands, reciting those verses under the cope of a moonlight sky, without having his raptures in the least disturbed by a suspicion of their absurdity!—If these two distinguished writers could habitually think that the visible universe was of so little consequence to a poet, that it was scarcely necessary for him to cast his eyes upon it, we may be assured that those passages of the elder poets which faithfully and poetically describe the phenomena of nature, were not at that time held in much estimation, and that there was little accurate attention paid to those appearances.

Wonder is the natural product of Ignorance; and as the soil was in *such good condition* at the time of the publication of the 'Seasons,' the crop was doubtless abundant. Neither individuals nor nations become corrupt all at once, nor are they enlightened in a moment. Thomson was an inspired poet, but he could not work miracles; in cases where the art of seeing had in some degree been learned, the teacher would further the proficiency of his pupils, but he could do little more; though so far does vanity assist men in acts of self-deception, that many would often fancy they recognized a likeness when they knew nothing of the original. Having shown that much of what his biographer deemed genuine admiration must in fact have been blind wonderment—how is the rest to be accounted for?—Thomson was fortunate in the very title of his poem, which seemed to bring it home to the prepared sympathies of every one: in the next place, notwithstanding his high powers, he writes a vicious style; and his false ornaments are exactly of that kind which would be most likely to strike the undiscerning. He likewise abounds with sentimental common-places, that, from the manner in which they were brought forward, bore an imposing air of novelty. In any well-used copy of the 'Seasons' the book generally opens of itself with the rhapsody on love, or with one of the stories (perhaps 'Damon and Musidora'); these also are prominent in our collections of Extracts, and are the parts of his Work which, after all, were probably most efficient in first recommending the author to general notice. Pope, repaying praises which he had received, and wishing to extol him to the highest, only styles him 'an elegant and philosophical Poet'; nor are we able to collect any unquestionable proofs that the true characteristics of Thomson's genius as an imaginative poet¹ were perceived, till the elder Warton, almost forty years

1 *CORTES alone in a night-gown.
'All things are hush'd as Nature's self lay dead;
The mountains seem to nod their drowsy head,
The little Birds in dreams their songs repeat,
And sleeping Flowers beneath the Night-dew sweat:
Even Lust and Envy sleep; yet Love denies
Rest to my soul, and slumber to my eyes.'*
Dryden's *Indian Emperor*.

2 Since these observations upon Thomson were written, I have perused the second edition of his 'Seasons,' and find that even that does not contain the most striking passages which Warton points out for admiration; these, with other improvements, throughout the whole work, must have been added at a later period.

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after the publication of the 'Seasons,' pointed them out by a note in his Essay on the 'Life and Writings of Pope.' In the 'Castle of Indolence' (of which Gray speaks so coldly) these characteristics were almost as conspicuously displayed, and in verse more harmonious, and diction more pure. Yet that fine poem was neglected on its appearance, and is at this day the delight only of a few!

When Thomson died, Collins breathed forth his regrets in an Elegiac Poem, in which he pronounces a poetical curse upon him who should regard with insensibility the place where the Poet's remains were deposited. The Poems of the mourner himself have now passed through innumerable editions, and are universally known; but if, when Collins died, the same kind of imprecation had been pronounced by a surviving admirer, small is the number whom it would not have comprehended. The notice which his poems attained during his lifetime was so small, and of course the sale so insignificant, that not long before his death he deemed it right to repay to the bookseller the sum which he had advanced for them, and threw the edition into the fire.

Next in importance to the 'Seasons' of Thomson, though at considerable distance from that work in order of time, come the 'Reliques of Ancient English Poetry,' collected, new-modelled, and in many instances (if such a contradiction in terms may be used) composed by the Editor, Dr. Percy. This work did not steal silently into the world, as is evident from the number of legendary tales, that appeared not long after its publication; and had been modelled, as the authors persuaded themselves, after the old Ballad. The Compilation was however ill suited to the then existing taste of city society; and Dr. Johnson, 'mid the little senate to which he gave laws, was not sparing in his exertions to make it an object of contempt. The critic triumphed, the legendary imitators were deservedly disregarded, and, as undeservedly, their ill-imitated models sank, in this country, into temporary neglect; while Bürger, and other able writers of Germany, were translating or imitating these Reliques, and composing, with the aid of inspiration thence derived, poems which are the delight of the German nation. Dr. Percy was so abashed by the ridicule flung upon his labours from the ignorance and insensibility of the persons with whom he lived, that, though while he was writing under a mask he had not wanted resolution to follow his genius into the regions of true simplicity and genuine pathos (as is evinced by the exquisite ballad of 'Sir Cautine' and by many other pieces), yet when he appeared in his own person and character as a poetical writer, he adopted, as in the tale of the 'Hermit of Warkworth,' a diction scarcely in any one of its features distinguishable from the vague, the glossy, and unfeeling language of his day. I mention this remarkable fact with regret, esteeming the genius of Dr. Percy in this kind of writing superior to that of any other man by whom in modern times it has been cultivated. That even Bürger (to whom

Klopstock gave, in my hearing, a commendation which he denied to Goethe and Schiller, pronouncing him to be a genuine poet, and one of the few among the Germans whose works would last) had not the fine sensibility of Percy, might be shown from many passages, in which he has deserted his original only to go astray. For example,

'Now daye was gone, and night was come,
And all were fast asleep,
All save the Lady Emeline,
Who sate in her bowre to weep:

'And soone she heard her true Love's voice
Low whispering at the walle,
Awake, awake, my dear Ladye,
'Tis I thy true-love call.'

Which is thus tricked out and dilated:

'Als nun die Nacht Gebirg' und Thal
Vermummt in Rabenschatten,
Und Hochburgs Lampen überall
Schon ausgeflimmert hatten,
Und alles tief entschlafen war;
Doch nur das Fräulein immerdar,
Voll Fieberangst, noch wachte,
Und seinen Ritter dachte:
Da horch! Ein süsser Liebeston
Kam leis' empor geflogen.
'Ho, Trudchen, ho! Da bin ich schon!
Frisch auf! Dich angezogen!'

But from humble ballads we must ascend to heroics.

All hail, Macpherson! hail to thee, Sire of Ossian! The Phantom was begotten by the snug embrace of an impudent Highlander upon a cloud of tradition—it travelled southward, where it was greeted with acclamation, and the thin Consistence took its course through Europe, upon the breath of popular applause. The Editor of the 'Reliques' had indirectly preferred a claim to the praise of invention, by not concealing that his supplementary labours were considerable! how selfish his conduct, contrasted with that of the disinterested Gael, who, like Lear, gives his kingdom away, and is content to become a pensioner upon his own issue for a beggarly pittance!—Open this far-famed Book!—I have done so at random, and the beginning of the 'Epic Poem Temora,' in eight Books, presents itself. 'The blue waves of Ullin roll in light. The green hills are covered with day. Trees shake their dusky heads in the breeze. Grey torrents pour their noisy streams. Two green hills with aged oaks surround a narrow plain. The blue course of a stream is there. On its banks stood Cairbar of Atha. His spear supports the king; the red eyes of his fear are sad. Cormac rises on his soul with all his ghastly wounds.' Precious memorandums from the pocket-book of the blind Ossian!

If it be unbecoming, as I acknowledge that for the most part it is, to speak disrespectfully of Works that have enjoyed for a length of time a widely-spread reputation, without at the same time producing irrefragable proofs of their unworthiness, let me be forgiven upon this occasion.—Having had the good fortune to be born and reared in a mountainous country, from my very childhood I have felt the falsehood that pervades the volumes imposed upon the world under the name of Ossian. From what I saw with my own eyes, I knew that the imagery was spurious. In nature everything is distinct, yet nothing defined into absolute independent singleness. In Macpherson's work, it is exactly the reverse; everything (that is not stolen) is in this manner defined, insulated, dislocated, deadened,—yet nothing distinct. It will

¹ Shenstone, in his 'Schoolmistress,' gives a still more remarkable instance of this timidity. On its first appearance (see D'Israeli's 2nd Series of the 'Curiosities of Literature') the Poem was accompanied with an absurd prose commentary, showing, as indeed some incongruous expressions in the text imply, that the whole was intended for burlesque. In subsequent editions, the commentary was dropped, and the Poem have since continued to read in seriousness, doing for the Author what he had not courage openly to venture upon for himself.

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always be so when words are substituted for things. To say that the characters never could exist, that the manners are impossible, and that a dream has more substance than the whole state of society, as there depicted, is doing nothing more than pronouncing a censure which Macpherson defied; when, with the steeds of Morven before his eyes, he could talk so familiarly of his Car-borne heroes;—of Morven, which, if one may judge from its appearance at the distance of a few miles, contains scarcely an acre of ground sufficiently accommodating for a sledge to be trailed along its surface.—Mr. Malcolm Laing has ably shown that the diction of this pretended translation is a motley assemblage from all quarters; but he is so fond of making out parallel passages as to call poor Macpherson to account for his ‘ands’ and his ‘burs!’ and he has weakened his argument by conducting it as if he thought that every striking resemblance was a *conscious* plagiarism. It is enough that the coincidences are too remarkable for its being probable or possible that they could arise in different minds without communication between them. Now as the Transors of the Bible, and Shakspeare, Milton, and Pope, could not be indebted to Macpherson, it follows that he must have owed his fine feathers to them; unless we are prepared gravely to assert, with Madame de Staël, that many of the characteristic beauties of our most celebrated English Poets are derived from the ancient Fingalian; in which case the modern translator would have been but giving back to Ossian his own.—It is consistent that Lucien Buonaparte, who could censure Milton for having surrounded Satan in the infernal regions with courtly and regal splendour, should pronounce the modern Ossian to be the glory of Scotland;—a country that has produced a Dunbar, a Buchanan, a Thomson, and a Burns! These opinions are of ill omen for the Epic ambition of him who has given them to the world.

Yet, much as those pretended treasures of antiquity have been admired, they have been wholly unimportant upon the literature of the Country. No succeeding writer appears to have caught from them a ray of inspiration; no author, in the least distinguished, has ventured formally to imitate them—except the boy, Chatterton, on their first appearance. He had perceived, from the successful trials which he himself had made in literary forgery, how few critics were able to distinguish between a real ancient medal and a counterfeit of modern manufacture; and he set himself to the work of filling a magazine with *Saxon Poems*,—counterparts of those of Ossian, as like his as one of his misty stars is to another. This incapability to amalgamate with the literature of the Island, is, in my estimation, a decisive proof that the book is essentially unnatural; nor should I require any other to demonstrate it to be a forgery, audacious as worthless.—Contrast, in this respect, the effect of Macpherson’s publication with the ‘Reliques’ of Percy, so unassuming, so modest in their pretensions!—I have already stated how much Germany is indebted to this latter work; and for our own country, its poetry has been absolutely redeemed by it. I do not think that there is an able writer in verse of the present day who would not be proud to acknowledge his obligations to the ‘Reliques;’ I know that it is so with my friends; and, for myself, I am happy in this occasion to make a public avowal of my own.

Dr. Johnson, more fortunate in his contempt of the labours of Macpherson than those of his modest friend, was solicited not long after to

furnish Prefaces biographical and critical for the works of some of the most eminent English Poets. The booksellers took upon themselves to make the collection; they referred probably to the most popular miscellanies, and, unquestionably, to their books of accounts; and decided upon the claim of authors to be admitted into a body of the most eminent, from the familiarity of their names with the readers of that day, and by the profits, which, from the sale of his works, each had brought and was bringing to the Trade. The Editor was allowed a limited exercise of discretion, and the Authors whom he recommended are scarcely to be mentioned without a smile. We open the volume of Prefatory Lives, and to our astonishment the first name we find is that of Cowley!—What is become of the morning-star of English Poetry? Where is the bright Elizabethan constellation? Or, if names be more acceptable than images, where is the ever-to-be-honoured Chaucer? where is Spenser? where Sidney? and, lastly, where he, whose rights as a poet, contra-distinguished from those which he is universally allowed to possess as a dramatist, we have vindicated,—where Shakspeare?—These, and a multitude of others not unworthy to be placed near them, their contemporaries and successors, we have *not*. But in their stead, we have (could better be expected when precedence was to be settled by an abstract of reputation at any given period made, as in this case before us?) Roscommon, and Stepney, and Phillips, and Walsh, and Smith, and Duke, and King, and Spratt—Halifax, Granville, Sheffield, Congreve, Broome, and other reputed Magnates—metrical writers utterly worthless and useless, except for occasions like the present, when their productions are referred to as evidence what a small quantity of brain is necessary to procure a considerable stock of admiration, provided the aspirant will accommodate himself to the likings and fashions of his day.

As I do not mean to bring down this retrospect to our own times, it may with propriety be closed at the era of this distinguished event. From the literature of other ages and countries, proofs equally cogent might have been adduced, that the opinions announced in the former part of this Essay are founded upon truth. It was not an agreeable office, nor a prudent undertaking, to declare them; but their importance seemed to render it a duty. It may still be asked, where lies the particular relation of what has been said to these Volumes?—The question will be easily answered by the discerning Reader who is old enough to remember the taste that prevailed when some of these poems were first published, seventeen years ago; who has also observed to what degree the poetry of this Island has since that period been coloured by them; and who is further aware of the unremitting hostility with which, upon some principle or other, they have each and all been opposed. A sketch of my own notion of the constitution of Fame has been given; and, as far as concerns myself, I have cause to be satisfied. The love, the admiration, the indifference, the slight, the aversion, and even the contempt, with which these Poems have been received, knowing, as I do, the source within my own mind, from which they have proceeded, and the labour and pains which, when labour and pains appeared needful, have been bestowed upon them, must all, if I think consistently, be received as pledges and tokens, bearing the same general impression, though widely different in value;—they are all proofs that for the present time I have not laboured

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in vain; and afford assurances, more or less authentic, that the products of my industry will endure.

If there be one conclusion more forcibly pressed upon us than another by the review which has been given of the fortunes and fate of poetical Works, it is this,—that every author, as far as he is great and at the same time *original*, has had the task of *creating* the taste by which he is to be enjoyed; so has it been, so will it continue to be. This remark was long since made to me by the philosophical Friend for the separation of whose poems from my own I have previously expressed my regret. The predecessors of an original Genius of a high order will have smoothed the way for all that he has in common with them;—and much he will have in common; but, for what is peculiarly his own, he will be called upon to clear and often to shape his own road:—he will be in the condition of Hannibal among the Alps.

And where lies the real difficulty of creating that taste by which a truly original poet is to be relished? Is it in breaking the bonds of custom, in overcoming the prejudices of false refinement, and displacing the aversions of inexperience? Or, if he labour for an object which here and elsewhere I have proposed to myself, does it consist in divesting the reader of the pride that induces him to dwell upon those points wherein men differ from each other, to the exclusion of those in which all men are alike, or the same; and in making him ashamed of the vanity that renders him insensible of the appropriate excellence which civil arrangements, less unjust than might appear, and Nature illimitable in her bounty, have conferred on men who may stand below him in the scale of society? Finally, does it lie in establishing that dominion over the spirits of readers by which they are to be humbled and humanised, in order that they may be purified and exalted?

If these ends are to be attained by the mere communication of *knowledge*, it does *not* lie here.—TASTE, I would remind the reader, like IMAGINATION, is a word which has been forced to extend its services far beyond the point to which philosophy would have confined them. It is a metaphor, taken from a *passive* sense of the human body, and transferred to things which are in their essence *not* passive,—to intellectual *acts* and *operations*. The word, Imagination, has been overstrained, from impulses honourable to mankind, to meet the demands of the faculty which is perhaps the noblest of our nature. In the instance of Taste, the process has been reversed; and from the prevalence of dispositions at once injurious and discreditable, being no other than that selfishness which is the child of apathy,—which, as Nations decline in productive and creative power, makes them value themselves upon a presumed refinement of judging. Poverty of language is the primary cause of the use which we make of the word, Imagination; but the word, Taste, has been stretched to the sense which it bears in modern Europe by habits of self-conceit, inducing that inversion in the order of things whereby a passive faculty is made paramount among the faculties conversant with the fine arts. Proportion and congruity, the requisite knowledge being supposed, are subjects upon which taste may be trusted; it is competent to this office;—for in its intercourse with these the mind is *passive*, and is affected painfully or pleasurably as by an instinct. But the profound and the exquisite in feeling, the lofty and universal in thought and imagination; or, in ordinary language, the pathetic and the sublime;—

are neither of them, accurately speaking, objects of a faculty which could ever without a sinking in the spirit of Nations have been designated by the metaphor.—Taste. And why? Because without the exertion of a co-operating power in the mind of the Reader, there can be no adequate sympathy with either of these emotions; without this auxiliary impulse, elevated or profound passion cannot exist.

Passion, it must be observed, is derived from a word which signifies *suffering*; but the connection which suffering has with effort, with exertion, and *action*, is immediate and inseparable. How strikingly is this property of human nature exhibited by the fact, that, in popular language, to be in a passion, is to be angry!—But,

‘Anger in hasty words or blows
Itself discharges on its foci.’

To be moved, then, by a passion, is to be excited, often to external, and always to internal, effort; whether for the continuance and strengthening of the passion, or for its suppression, accordingly as the course which it takes may be painful or pleasurable. If the latter, the soul must contribute to its support, or it never becomes vivid,—and soon languishes, and dies. And this brings us to the point. If every great poet with whose writings men are familiar, in the highest exercise of his genius, before he can be thoroughly enjoyed, has to call forth and to communicate *power*, this service, in a still greater degree, falls upon an original writer, at his first appearance in the world.—Of genius the only proof is, the act of doing well what is worthy to be done, and what was never done before: Of genius, in the fine arts, the only infallible sign is the widening the sphere of human sensibility, for the delight, honour, and benefit of human nature. Genius is the introduction of a new element into the intellectual universe; or, if that be not allowed, it is the application of powers to objects on which they had not before been exercised, or the employment of them in such a manner as to produce effects hitherto unknown. What is all this but an advance, or a conquest, made by the soul of the poet? Is it to be supposed that the reader can make progress of this kind, like an Indian prince or general—stretched on his palanquin, and borne by his slaves? No; he is invigorated and inspirited by his leader, in order that he may exert himself; for he cannot proceed in quiescence, he cannot be carried like a dead weight. Therefore to create taste is to call forth and bestow power, of which knowledge is the effect; and *there* lies the true difficulty.

As the pathetic participates of an *animal* sensation, it might seem—that, if the springs of this emotion were genuine, all men, possessed of competent knowledge of the facts and circumstances, would be instantaneously affected. And, doubtless, in the works of every true poet will be found passages of that species of excellence, which is proved by effects immediate and universal. But there are emotions of the pathetic that are simple and direct, and others—that are complex and revolutionary; some—to which the heart yields with gentleness; others—against which it struggles with pride; these varieties are infinite as the combinations of circumstance and the constitutions of character. Remember, also, that the medium through which, in poetry, the heart is to be affected, is language; a thing subject to endless fluctuations and arbitrary associations. The genius of the poet melts these down for his purpose; but they retain their shape and quality to him who is

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not capable of exerting, within his own mind, a corresponding energy. There is also a meditative, as well as a human, pathos; an enthusiastic, as well as an ordinary, sorrow; a sadness that has its seat in the depths of reason, to which the mind cannot sink gently of itself—but to which it must descend by treading the steps of thought. And for the sublime,—if we consider what are the cares that occupy the passing day, and how remote is the practice and the course of life from the sources of sublimity, in the soul of Man, can it be wondered that there is little existing preparation for a poet: charged with a new mission to extend its kingdom, and to augment and spread its enjoyments?

Away, then, with the senseless iteration of the word, *popular*, applied to new works in poetry, as if there were no test of excellence in this first of the fine arts but that all men should run after its productions, as if urged by an appetite, or constrained by a spell!—The qualities of writing best fitted for eager reception are either such as startle the world into attention by their audacity and extravagance: or they are chiefly of a superficial kind, lying upon the surfaces of manners; or arising out of a selection and arrangement of incidents, by which the mind is kept upon the stretch of curiosity, and the fancy amused without the trouble of thought. But in everything which is to send the soul into herself, to be admonished of her weakness, or to be made conscious of her power:—wherever life and nature are described as operated upon by the creative or abstracting virtue of the imagination; wherever the instinctive wisdom of antiquity and her heroic passions uniting, in the heart of the poet, with the meditative wisdom of later ages, have produced that accord of sublimated humanity, which is at once a history of the remote past and a prophetic enunciation of the remotest future, *there*, the poet must reconcile himself for a season to few and scattered hearers.—Grand thoughts (and Shakspeare must often have sighed over this truth), as they are most naturally and most fitly conceived in solitude, so can they not be brought forth in the midst of plaudits, without some violation of their sanctity. Go to a silent exhibition of the productions of the sister Art, and be convinced that the qualities which dazzle at first sight, and kindle the admiration of the multitude, are essentially different from those by which permanent influence is secured. Let us not shrink from following up these principles as far as they will carry us, and conclude with observing—that there never has been a period, and perhaps never will be, in which vicious poetry, of some kind or other, has not excited more zealous admiration, and been far more generally read, than good; but this advantage attends the good, that the *individual*, as well as the species, survives from age to age; whereas, of the depraved, though the species be

immortal, the individual quickly *perishes*; the object of present admiration vanishes, being supplanted by some other as easily produced; which, though no better, brings with it at least the irritation of novelty,—with adaptation, more or less skilful, to the changing humours of the majority of those who are most at leisure to regard poetical works when they first solicit their attention.

Is it the result of the whole, that, in the opinion of the Writer, the judgment of the People is not to be respected? The thought is most injurious; and, could the charge be brought against him, he would repel it with indignation. The People have already been justified, and their eulogium pronounced by implication, when it was said, above—that, of *good* poetry, the *individual*, as well as the species, *survives*. And how does it survive but through the People? What preserves it but their intellect and their wisdom?

—Past and future, are the wings
On whose support, harmoniously conjoined,
Moves the great Spirit of human knowledge—
MS.

The voice that issues from this Spirit, is that Vox Populi which the Deity inspires. Foolish must be he who can mistake for this a local acclamation, or a transitory outcry—transitory though it be for years, local though from a Nation. Still more lamentable is his error who can believe that there is anything of divine infallibility in the clamour of that small though loud portion of the community, ever governed by factitious influence, which, under the name of the PUBLIC, passes itself, upon the unthinking, for the PEOPLE. Towards the Public, the Writer hopes that he feels as much deference as it is entitled to: but to the People, philosophically characterised, and to the embodied spirit of their knowledge, so far as it exists and moves, at the present, faithfully supported by its two wings, the past and the future, his devout respect, his reverence, is due. He offers it willingly and readily; and, this done, takes leave of his Readers, by assuring them—that, if he were not persuaded that the contents of these Volumes, and the Work to which they are subsidiary, evince something of the 'Vision and the Faculty divine;' and that, both in words and things, they will operate in their degree, to extend the domain of sensibility for the delight, the honour, and the benefit of human nature, not withstanding the many happy hours which he has employed in their composition, and the manifold comforts and enjoyments they have procured to him, he would not, if a wish could do it, save them from immediate destruction;—from becoming at this moment, to the world, as a thing that had never been.

1815.

DEDICATION

PREFIXED TO THE EDITION OF 1815

TO SIR GEORGE HOWLAND BEAUMONT, BART.

MY DEAR SIR GEORGE,

Accept my thanks for the permission given me to dedicate these Volumes to you. In addition to a lively pleasure derived from general considerations, I feel a particular satisfaction; for, by inscribing these Poems with your Name, I seem to myself in some degree to repay, by an appropriate

honour, the great obligation which I owe to one part of the Collection—as having been the means of first making us personally known to each other. Upon much of the remainder, also, you have a peculiar claim,—for some of the best pieces were composed under the shade of your own groves, upon the classic ground of Coleorton; where I was

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animated by the recollection of those illustrious Poets of your name and family, who were born in that neighbourhood; and, we may be assured, did not wander with indifference by the dashing stream of Grace Dieu, and among the rocks that diversify the forest of Charnwood.—Nor is there any one to whom such parts of this Collection as have been inspired or coloured by the beautiful Country from which I now address you, could be presented with more propriety than to yourself—to whom it has suggested so many admirable pictures. Early in life, the sublimity and beauty of this region excited your admiration; and I know that you are bound to it in mind by a still strengthening attachment.

Wishing and hoping that this Work, with the embellishments it has received from your pencil,¹ may survive as a lasting memorial of a friendship, which I reckon among the blessings of my life,

I have the honour to be,
My dear Sir George,
Yours most affectionately and faithfully,
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH,

RYDAL MOUNT, WESTMORELAND,

February 1, 1815.

¹ The state of the plates has, for some time, not allowed them to be repeated.

PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1815

THE powers requisite for the production of poetry are: first, those of Observation and Description,—i.e. the ability to observe with accuracy things as they are in themselves, and with fidelity to describe them, unmodified by any passion or feeling existing in the mind of the describer; whether the things depicted be actually present to the senses, or have a place only in the memory. This power, though indispensable to a Poet, is one which he employs only in submission to necessity, and never for a continuance of time: as its exercise supposes all the higher qualities of the mind to be passive, and in a state of subjection to external objects, much in the same way as a translator or engraver ought to be to his original. 2ndly, Sensibility,—which, the more exquisite it is, the wider will be the range of a poet's perceptions; and the more will he be incited to observe objects, both as they exist in themselves and as re-acted upon by his own mind. (The distinction between poetic and human sensibility has been marked in the character of the Poet delineated in the original preface.) 3rdly, Reflection,—which makes the Poet acquainted with the value of actions, images, thoughts, and feelings; and assists the sensibility in perceiving their connection with each other. 4thly, Imagination and Fancy,—to modify, to create, and to associate. 5thly, Invention,—by which characters are composed out of materials supplied by observation; whether of the Poet's own heart and mind, or of external life and nature; and such incidents and situations produced as are most impressive to the imagination, and most fitted to do justice to the characters, sentiments, and passions, which the Poet undertakes to illustrate. And, lastly, Judgment,—to decide how and where, and in what degree, each of these faculties ought to be exerted; so that the less shall not be sacrificed to the greater; nor the greater, slighting the less, arrogant, to its own injury, more than its due. By judgment, also, is determined what are the laws and appropriate graces of every species of composition.¹

The materials of Poetry, by these powers collected and produced, are cast, by means of various moulds, into divers forms. The moulds may be enumerated, and the forms specified, in the following order. 1st, The Narrative,—including the Epopœia, the Historic Poem, the Tale, the Romance, the Mock-heroic, and, if the spirit of Homer will tolerate such neighbourhood, that

¹ As sensibility to harmony of numbers, and the power of producing it, are invariably attendants upon the faculties above specified, nothing has been said upon those requisites.

dear production of our days, the metrical Novel. Of this Class, the distinguishing mark is, that the Narrator, however liberally his speaking agents be introduced, is himself the source from which everything primarily flows. Epic Poets, in order that their mode of composition may accord with the elevation of their subject, represent themselves as *singing* from the inspiration of the Muse, 'Arma virumque cano;' but this is a fiction, in modern times, of slight value: the 'Iliad' or the 'Paradise Lost' would gain little in our estimation by being chanted. The other poets who belong to this class are commonly content to *tell* their tale;—so that of the whole it may be affirmed that they neither require nor reject the accompaniment of music.

2ndly, The Dramatic,—consisting of Tragedy, Historic Drama, Comedy, and Masque, in which the Poet does not appear at all in his own person, and where the whole action is carried on by speech and dialogue of the agents; music being admitted only incidentally and rarely. The Opera may be placed here, inasmuch as it proceeds by dialogue; though depending, to the degree that it does, upon music, it has a strong claim to be ranked with the lyrical. The characteristic and impassioned Epistle, of which Ovid and Pope have given examples, considered as a species of monodrama, may, without impropriety, be placed in this class.

3rdly, The Lyrical,—containing the Hymn, the Ode, the Elegy, the Song, and the Ballad; in all which, for the production of their full effect, an accompaniment of music is indispensable.

4thly, The Idyllium,—descriptive chiefly either of the processes and appearances of external nature, as the 'Seasons' of Thomson; or of characters, manners, and sentiments, as are Shenstone's 'Schoolmistress,' 'The Cotter's Saturday Night' of Burns, 'The Two Dogs' of the same Author; or of these in conjunction with the appearances of Nature, as most of the pieces of Theocritus, the 'Allegro' and 'Penseroso' of Milton, Beattie's 'Minstrel,' Goldsmith's 'Deserted Village.' The Epitaph, the Inscription, the Sonnet, most of the epistles of poets writing in their own persons, and all loco-descriptive poetry, belong to this class.

5thly, Didactic,—the principal object of which is direct instruction; as the Poem of Lucretius, the 'Georgics' of Virgil, 'The Fleece' of Dyer, Mason's 'English Garden,' &c.

And, lastly, philosophical Satire, like that of Horace and Juvenal; personal and occasional Satire rarely comprehending sufficient of the general in the individual to be dignified with the name of poetry.

Out of the three last has been constructed a com-

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posite order, of which Young's 'Night Thoughts,' and Cowper's 'Task,' are excellent examples.

It is deducible from the above, that poems, apparently miscellaneous, may with propriety be arranged either with reference to the powers of mind *predominant* in the production of them; or to the mould in which they are cast; or, lastly, to the subjects to which they relate. From each of these considerations, the following Poems have been divided into classes; which, that the work may more obviously correspond with the course of human life, and for the sake of exhibiting in it the three requisites of a legitimate whole, a beginning, a middle, and an end, have been also arranged, as far as it was possible, according to an order of time, commencing with Childhood, and terminating with Old Age, Death, and Immortality. My guiding wish was, that the small pieces of which these volumes consist, thus discriminated, might be regarded under a two-fold view; as composing an entire work within themselves, and as adjuncts to the philosophical Poem, 'The Recluse.' This arrangement has long presented itself habitually to my own mind. Nevertheless, I should have preferred to scatter the contents of these volumes at random, if I had been persuaded that, by the plan adopted, anything material would be taken from the natural effect of the pieces, individually, on the mind of the unreflecting Reader. I trust there is a sufficient variety in each class to prevent this; while, for him who reads with reflection, the arrangement will serve as a commentary unostentatiously directing his attention to my purposes, both particular and general. But, as I wish to guard against the possibility of misleading by this classification, it is proper first to remind the Reader, that certain poems are placed according to the powers of mind, in the Author's conception, predominant in the production of them; *predominant*, which implies the exertion of other faculties in less degree. Where there is more imagination than fancy in a poem, it is placed under the head of imagination, and *vice versâ*. Both the above classes might without impropriety have been enlarged from that consisting of 'Poems founded on the Affections;' as might this latter from those, and from the class 'proceeding from Sentiment and Reflection.' The most striking characteristics of each piece, mutual illustration, variety, and proportion, have governed me throughout.

None of the other Classes, except those of Fancy and Imagination, require any particular notice. But a remark of general application may be made. All Poets, except the dramatic, have been in the practice of feigning that their works were composed to the music of the harp or lyre: with what degree of affectation this has been done in modern times, I leave to the judicious to determine. For my own part, I have not been disposed to violate probability so far, or to make such a large demand upon the Reader's charity. Some of these pieces are essentially lyrical; and, therefore, cannot have their due force without a supposed musical accompaniment; but, in much the greatest part, as a substitute for the classic lyre or romantic harp, I require nothing more than an animated or impassioned recitation, adapted to the subject. Poems, however humble in their kind, if they be good in that kind, cannot read themselves; the law of long syllable and short must not be so inflexible,—the letter of metre must not be so impassive to the spirit of versification,—as to deprive the Reader of all voluntary power to modulate, in subordination to the sense, the music of the poem;—

in the same manner as his mind is left at liberty, and even summoned, to act upon its thoughts and images. But, though the accompaniment of a musical instrument be frequently dispensed with, the true Poet does not therefore abandon his privilege distinct from that of the mere Proseman;

'He murmurs near the running brooks
A music sweeter than their own.'

Let us come now to the consideration of the words *Fancy* and *Imagination*, as employed in the classification of the following Poems. 'A man,' says an intelligent author, 'has imagination in proportion as he can distinctly copy in idea the impressions of sense: it is the faculty which *images* within the mind the phenomena of sensation. A man has fancy in proportion as he can call up, connect, or associate, at pleasure, those internal images (*phantasies*) as to cause to appear) so as to complete ideal representations of absent objects. Imagination is the power of depicting, and fancy of evoking and combining. The imagination is formed by patient observation; the fancy by a voluntary activity in shifting the scenery of the mind. The more accurate the imagination, the more safely may a painter, or a poet, undertake a delineation, or a description, without the presence of the objects to be characterised. The more versatile the fancy, the more original and striking will be the decorations produced.'—*British Synonyms discriminated*, by W. Taylor.

Is not this as if a man should undertake to supply an account of a building, and be so intent upon what he had discovered of the foundation, as to conclude his task without once looking up at the superstructure? Here, as in other instances throughout the volume, the judicious Author's mind is enthralled by Etymology; he takes up the original word as his guide and escort, and too often does not perceive how soon he becomes its prisoner, without liberty to tread in any path but that to which it confines him. It is not easy to find out how imagination, thus explained, differs from distinct remembrance of images; or fancy from quick and vivid recollection of them: each is nothing more than a mode of memory. If the two words bear the above meaning, and no other, what term is left to designate that faculty of which the Poet is 'all compact;' he whose eye glances from earth to heaven, whose spiritual attributes body forth what his pen is prompt in turning to shape; or what is left to characterise *Fancy*, as insinuating herself into the heart of objects with creative activity?—Imagination, in the sense of the word as giving title to a class of the following Poems, has no reference to images that are merely a faithful copy, existing in the mind, of absent external objects; but is a word of higher import, denoting operations of the mind upon those objects, and processes of creation or of composition, governed by certain fixed laws. I proceed to illustrate my meaning by instances. A parrot hangs from the wires of his cage by his beak or by his claws; or a monkey from the bough of a tree by his paws or his tail. Each creature does so literally and actually. In the first Eclogue of Virgil, the shepherd, thinking of the time when he is to take leave of his farm, thus addresses his goats:—

'Non ego vos posthac viridi projectus in antro
Dumosa pendere procul de rupe videbo.'

—'half way down
Hangs one who gathers samphire.'

is the well-known expression of Shakespeare,

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defining an ordinary image upon the cliffs of Dover. In these two instances is a slight exertion of the faculty which I denominate imagination, in the use of one word: neither the goats nor the sapphire-gatherer do literally hang, as does the parrot or the monkey; but, presenting to the senses something of such an appearance, the mind in its activity, for its own gratification, contemplates them as hanging.

'As when far off at sea a fleet described
Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds
Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles
Of Ternate or Tidore, whence merchants bring
Their spicy drugs; they on the trading flood
Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape
Fly, stemming nightly toward the Pole: so seemed
Far off the flying Fiend.'

Here is the full strength of the imagination involved in the word *hangs*, and exerted upon the whole image: First, the fleet, an aggregate of many ships, is represented as one mighty person, whose track, we know and feel, is upon the waters; but, taking advantage of its appearance to the senses, the Poet dares to represent it as *hanging in the clouds*, both for the gratification of the mind in contemplating the image itself, and in reference to the motion and appearance of the sublime objects to which it is compared.

From impressions of sight we will pass to those of sound; which, as they must necessarily be of a less definite character, shall be selected from these volumes:

'Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove broods;'
of the same bird,

'His voice was buried among trees,
Yet to be come at by the breeze;'

'O, Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?'

The stock-dove is said to *coo*, a sound well imitating the note of the bird; but, by the intervention of the metaphor *broods*, the affections are called in by the imagination to assist in marking the manner in which the bird reiterates and prolongs her soft note, as if herself delighting to listen to it, and participating of a still and quiet satisfaction, like that which may be supposed inseparable from the continuous process of incubation. 'His voice was buried among trees,' a metaphor expressing the love of *seclusion* by which this Bird is marked; and characterising its note as not partaking of the shrill and the piercing, and therefore more easily deadened by the intervening shade; yet a note so peculiar and withal so pleasing, that the breeze, gifted with that love of the sound which the Poet feels, penetrates the shades in which it is entombed, and conveys it to the ear of the listener.

'Shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?'

This concise interrogation characterises the seeming ubiquity of the voice of the cuckoo, and dispossesses the creature almost of a corporeal existence; the Imagination being tempted to this exertion of her power by a consciousness in the memory that the cuckoo is almost perpetually heard throughout the season of spring, but seldom becomes an object of sight.

Thus far of images independent of each other, and immediately endowed by the mind with properties that do not inhere in them, upon an incitement from properties and qualities the existence of which is inherent and obvious. These processes

of imagination are carried on either by conferring additional properties upon an object, or abstracting from it some of those which it actually possesses, and thus enabling it to re-act upon the mind which hath performed the process, like a new existence.

I pass from the Imagination acting upon an individual image to a consideration of the same faculty employed upon images in a conjunction by which they modify each other. The Reader has already had a fine instance before him in the passage quoted from Virgil, where the apparently perilous situation of the goat, hanging upon the shaggy precipice, is contrasted with that of the shepherd contemplating it from the seclusion of the cavern in which he lies stretched at ease and in security. Take these images separately, and how unaffecting the picture compared with that produced by their being thus connected with, and opposed to, each other!

'As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
Couched on the bald top of an eminence,
Wonder to all who do the same espy
By what means it could thither come, and whence,
So that it seems a thing endued with sense,
Like a sea-beast crawled forth, which on a shelf
Of rock or sand reposes, there to sun himself,

Such seemed this Man; not all alive or dead
Nor all asleep, in his extreme old age.

Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood,
That heareth not the loud winds when they call,
And moveth altogether if it move at all.'

In these images, the conferring, the abstracting, and the modifying powers of the Imagination, immediately and mediately acting, are all brought into conjunction. The stone is endowed with something of the power of life to approximate it to the sea-beast; and the sea-beast stripped of some of its vital qualities to assimilate it to the stone; which intermediate image is thus treated for the purpose of bringing the original image, that of the stone, to a nearer resemblance to the figure and condition of the aged Man; who is divested of so much of the indications of life and motion as to bring him to the point where the two objects unite and coalesce in just comparison. After what has been said, the image of the cloud need not be commented upon.

Thus far of an endowing or modifying power: but the Imagination also shapes and creates; and how? By innumerable processes; and in none does it more delight than in that of consolidating numbers into unity, and dissolving and separating unity into number,—alternations proceeding from, and governed by, a sublime consciousness of the soul in her own mighty and almost divine powers. Recur to the passage already cited from Milton. When the compact Fleet, as one Person, has been introduced 'sailing from Bengala,' 'They,' i.e. the 'merchants,' representing the fleet resolved into a multitude of ships, 'ply' their voyage towards the extremities of the earth: 'So,' (referring to the word 'As' in the commencement) 'seemed the flying Fiend;' the image of his Person acting to recombine the multitude of ships into one body,—the point from which the comparison set out. 'So seemed,' and to whom seemed? To the heavenly Muse who dictates the poem, to the eye of the Poet's mind, and to that of the Reader, present at one moment in the wide Ethiopian, and the next in the solitudes, then first broken in upon, of the infernal regions!

'Modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis.'

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Hear again this mighty Poet,—speaking of the Messiah going forth to expel from heaven the rebellious angels,

'Attended by ten thousand thousand Saints
He onward came: far off his coming shone,'—

the retinue of Saints, and the Person of the Messiah himself, lost almost and merged in the splendour of that indefinite abstraction 'His coming!'

As I do not mean here to treat this subject further than to throw some light upon the present Volumes, and especially upon one division of them, I shall spare myself and the Reader the trouble of considering the Imagination as it deals with thoughts and sentiments, as it regulates the composition of characters, and determines the course of actions: I will not consider it (more than I have already done by implication) as that power which, in the language of one of my most esteemed Friends, 'draws all things to one; which makes things animate or inanimate, beings with their attributes, subjects with their accessories, take one colour and serve to one effect!'. The grand storehouses of enthusiastic and meditative Imagination, of poetical, as contra-distinguished from human and dramatic Imagination, are the prophetic and lyrical parts of the Holy Scriptures, and the works of Milton; to which I cannot forbear to add those of Spenser. I select these writers in preference to those of ancient Greece and Rome, because the anthropomorphism of the Pagan religion subjected the minds of the greatest poets in those countries too much to the bondage of definite form; from which the Hebrews were preserved by their abhorrence of idolatry. This abhorrence was almost as strong in our great epic Poet, both from circumstances of his life, and from the constitution of his mind. However imbued the surface might be with classical literature, he was a Hebrew in soul; and all things tended in him towards the sublime. Spenser, of a gentler nature, maintained his freedom by aid of his allegorical spirit, at one time inciting him to create persons out of abstractions; and, at another, by a superior effort of genius, to give the universality and permanence of abstractions to his human beings, by means of attributes and emblems that belong to the highest moral truths and the purest sensations,—of which his character of Una is a glorious example. Of the human and dramatic Imagination the works of Shakspeare are an inexhaustible source.

'I tax not you, ye Elements, with unkindness,
I never gave you kingdoms, call'd you Daughters!'

And if, bearing in mind the many Poets distinguished by this prime quality, whose names I omit to mention; yet justified by recollection of the insults which the ignorant, the incapable, and the presumptuous, have heaped upon these and my other writings, I may be permitted to anticipate the judgment of posterity upon myself, I shall declare (censurable, I grant, if the notoriety of the fact above stated does not justify me) that I have given in these unfavourable times, evidence of exertions of this faculty upon its worthiest objects, the external universe, the moral and religious sentiments of Man, his natural affections, and his acquired passions; which have the same ennobling tendency as the productions of men, in this kind, worthy to be held in undying remembrance.

To the mode in which Fancy has already been characterised as the power of evoking and combining, or, as my friend Mr. Coleridge has styled

it, 'the aggregative and associative power,' my objection is only that the definition is too general. To aggregate and to associate, to evoke and to combine, belong as well to the Imagination as to the Fancy; but either the materials evoked and combined are different; or they are brought together under a different law, and for a different purpose. Fancy does not require that the materials which she makes use of should be susceptible of change in their constitution, from her touch; and, where they admit of modification, it is enough for her purpose if it be slight, limited, and evanescent. Directly the reverse of these, are the desires and demands of the Imagination. She recoils from everything but the plastic, the pliant, and the indefinite. She leaves it to Fancy to describe Queen Mab as coming,

'In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
On the fore-finger of an alderman.'

Having to speak of stature, she does not tell you that her gigantic Angel was as tall as Pompey's Pillar; much less that he was twelve cubits, or twelve hundred cubits high; or that his dimensions equalled those of Teneriffe or Atlas;—because these, and if they were a million times as high it would be the same, are bounded: The expression is, 'His stature reached the sky!' the illimitable firmament!—When the Imagination frames a comparison, if it does not strike on the first presentation, a sense of the truth of the likeness, from the moment that it is perceived, grows—and continues to grow—upon the mind; the resemblance depending less upon outline of form and feature, than upon expression and effect; less upon casual and outstanding, than upon inherent and internal, properties: moreover, the images invariably modify each other.—The law under which the processes of Fancy are carried on is as capricious as the accidents of things, and the effects are surprising, playful, ludicrous, amusing, tender, or pathetic, as the objects happen to be oppositely produced or fortunately combined. Fancy depends upon the rapidity and profusion with which she scatters her thoughts and images; trusting that their number, and the felicity with which they are linked together, will make amends for the want of individual value: or she prides herself upon the curious subtlety and the successful elaboration with which she can detect their lurking affinities. If she can win you over to her purpose, and impart to you her feelings, she cares not how unstable or transitory may be her influence, knowing that it will not be out of her power to resume it upon an apt occasion. But the Imagination is conscious of an indestructible dominion;—the Soul may fall away from it, not being able to sustain its grandeur; but, if once felt and acknowledged, by no act of any other faculty of the mind can it be relaxed, impaired, or diminished.—Fancy is given to quicken and to beguile the temporal part of our nature, Imagination to incite and to support the eternal.—Yet is it not the less true that Fancy, as she is an active, is also, under her own laws and in her own spirit, a creative faculty. In what manner Fancy ambitiously aims at a rivalry with Imagination, and Imagination stoops to work with the materials of Fancy, might be illustrated from the compositions of all eloquent writers, whether in prose or verse; and chiefly from those of our own Country. Scarcely a page of the impassioned parts of Bishop Taylor's Works can be opened that shall not afford examples.—Referring the Reader to those inestimable volumes, I will content myself with placing a conceit (ascribed to Lord Chesterfield)

¹ Charles Lamb upon the genius of Hogarth.

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in contrast with a passage from the 'Paradise Lost':—

'The dews of the evening most carefully shun,
They are the tears of the sky for the loss of the sun.'

After the transgression of Adam, Milton, with other appearances of sympathising Nature, thus marks the immediate consequence,

'Sky lowered, and, muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completion of the mortal sin.'

The associating link is the same in each instance: Dew and rain, not distinguishable from the liquid substance of tears, are employed as indications of sorrow. A flash of surprise is the effect in the former case; a flash of surprise, and nothing more; for the nature of things does not sustain the combination. In the latter, the effects from the act, of which there is this immediate consequence and visible sign, are so momentous, that the mind acknowledges the justice and reasonableness of the sympathy in nature so manifested; and the sky sweeps drops of water as if with human eyes, as 'Earth had before trembled from her entrails, and Nature given a second groan.'

Finally, I will refer to Cotton's 'Ode upon Winter,' an admirable composition, though stained with some peculiarities of the age in which he lived, for a general illustration of the characteristics of Fancy. The middle part of this ode contains a most lively description of the entrance of Winter, with his retinue, as 'A palsied king,' and yet a military monarch,—advancing for conquest with his army; the several bodies of which, and their arms and equipments, are described with a rapidity of detail, and a profusion of fanciful comparisons, which indicate on the part of the poet extreme activity of intellect, and a correspondent hurry of delightful feeling. Winter retires from the foe into his fortress, where

———'a magazine
Of sovereign juice is cellared in;
Liquor that will the siege maintain,
Should Phœbus ne'er return again.'

Though myself a water-drinker, I cannot resist the pleasure of transcribing what follows, as an instance still more happy of Fancy employed in

the treatment of feeling than, in its preceding passages, the Poem supplies of her management of forms.

'Tis that, that gives the poet rage,
And thaws the gelid blood of age;
Matures the young, restores the old,
And makes the fainting coward bold.

'It lays the careful head to rest,
Calms palpitations in the breast,
Renders our lives' misfortune sweet;

.....
'Then let the chill Sirocco blow,
And gird us round with hills of snow,
Or else go whistle to the shore,
And make the hollow mountains roar,

'Whilst we together jovial sit
Careless, and crowned with mirth and wit,
Where, though bleak winds confine us home
Our fancies round the world shall roam.

'We'll think of all the Friends we know,
And drink to all worth drinking to;
When having drunk all thine and mine,
We rather shall want healths than wine.

'But where Friends fail us, we'll supply
Our friendships with our charity;
Men that remote in sorrows live,
Shall by our lusty brimmers thrive.

'We'll drink the wanting into wealth,
And those that languish into health,
The afflicted into joy; th' oppress
Into security and rest.

'The worthy in disgrace shall find
Favour return again more kind,
And in restraint who stifled lie,
Shall taste the air of liberty.

'The brave shall triumph in success
The lover shall have mistresses,
Poor unregarded Virtue, praise,
And the neglected Poet, bays.

'Thus shall our healths do others good,
Whilst we ourselves do all we would;
For, freed from envy and from care,
What would we be but what we are?'

When I sat down to write this Preface, it was my intention to have made it more comprehensive; but, thinking that I ought rather to apologise for detaining the reader so long, I will here conclude.

POSTSCRIPT

1835

In the present volume, as in those that have preceded it, the reader will have found occasionally opinions expressed upon the course of public affairs, and feelings given vent to as national interests excited them. Since nothing, I trust, has been uttered but in the spirit of reflective patriotism, those notices are left to produce their own effect; but, among the many objects of general concern, and the changes going forward, which I have glanced at in verse, are some especially affecting the lower orders of society; in reference to these, I wish here to add a few words in plain prose.

Were I conscious of being able to do justice to those important topics, I might avail myself of the periodical press for offering anonymously my thoughts, such as they are, to the world; but I feel that, in procuring attention, they may derive some advantage, however small, from my name, in addi-

tion to that of being presented in a less fugitive shape. It is also not impossible that the state of mind which some of the foregoing poems may have produced in the reader, will dispose him to receive more readily the impression which I desire to make, and to admit the conclusions I would establish.

I. The first thing that presses upon my attention is the Poor-Law Amendment Act. I am aware of the magnitude and complexity of the subject, and the unwearied attention which it has received from men of far wider experience than my own; yet I cannot forbear touching upon one point of it, and to this I will confine myself, though not insensible to the objection which may reasonably be brought against treating a portion of this, or any other, great scheme of civil polity separately from the whole. The point to which I wish to

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draw the reader's attention is, that *all* persons who cannot find employment, or procure wages sufficient to support the body in health and strength, are entitled to a maintenance by law.

This dictate of humanity is acknowledged in the Report of the Commissioners; but is there not room for apprehension that some of the regulations of the new act have a tendency to render the principle nugatory by difficulties thrown in the way of applying it? If this be so, persons will not be wanting to show it, by examining the provisions of the act in detail,—an attempt which would be quite out of place here; but it will not, therefore, be deemed unbecoming in one who fears that the prudence of the head may, in framing some of those provisions, have supplanted the wisdom of the heart, to enforce a principle which cannot be violated without infringing upon one of the most precious rights of the English people, and opposing one of the most sacred claims of civilized humanity.

There can be no greater error, in this department of legislation, than the belief that this principle does by necessity operate for the degradation of those who claim, or are so circumstanced as to make it likely they may claim, through laws founded upon it, relief or assistance. The direct contrary is the truth: it may be unanswerably maintained that its tendency is to raise, not to depress; by stamping a value upon life, which can belong to it only where the laws have placed men who are willing to work, and yet cannot find employment, above the necessity of looking for protection against hunger and other natural evils, either to individual and casual charity, to despair and death, or to the breach of law by theft, or violence.

And here, as in the Report of the Commissioners the fundamental principle has been recognised, I am not at issue with them any farther than I am compelled to believe that their 'remedial measures' obstruct the application of it more than the interests of society require.

And, calling to mind the doctrines of political economy which are now prevalent, I cannot forbear to enforce the justice of the principle, and to insist upon its salutary operation.

And first for its justice: If self-preservation be the first law of our nature, would not every one in a state of nature be morally justified in taking to himself that which is indispensable to such preservation, where, by so doing, he would not rob another of that which might be equally indispensable to *his* preservation? And if the value of life be regarded in a right point of view, may it not be questioned whether this right of preserving life, at any expense short of endangering the life of another, does not survive man's entering into the social state; whether this right can be surrendered or forfeited, except when it opposes the divine law, upon any supposition of a social compact, or of any convention for the protection of mere rights of property?

But, if it be not safe to touch the abstract question of man's right in a social state to help himself even in the last extremity, may we not still contend for the duty of a christian government, standing *in loco parentis* towards all its subjects, to make such effectual provision, that no one shall be in danger of perishing either through the neglect or harshness of its legislation? Or, waiving this, is it not indisputable that the claim of the state to the allegiance, involves the protection, of the subject? And, as all rights in one party impose a correlative duty upon another, it follows that the right of the state to require the services of its

members, even to the jeoparding of their lives in the common defence, establishes a right in the people (not to be gainsaid by utilitarians and economists) to public support when, from any cause, they may be unable to support themselves.

Let us now consider the salutary and benign operation of this principle. Here we must have recourse to elementary feelings of human nature, and to truths which from their very obviousness are apt to be slighted, till they are forced upon our notice by our own sufferings or those of others. In the 'Paradise Lost,' Milton represents Adam, after the Fall, as exclaiming, in the anguish of his soul—

—'Did I request Thee, Maker, from my clay
To mould me man; did I solicit Thee
From darkness to promote me?
Concurred not to my being.' My will

Under how many various pressures of misery have men been driven thus, in a strain touching upon impiety, to expostulate with the Creator! and under few so afflictive as when the source and origin of earthly existence have been brought back to the mind by its impending close in the pangs of destitution. But as long as, in our legislation, due weight shall be given to this principle, no man will be forced to bewail the gift of life in hopeless want of the necessities of life.

Englishmen have, therefore, by the progress of civilisation among them, been placed in circumstances more favourable to piety and resignation to the divine will, than the inhabitants of other countries, where a like provision has not been established. And as Providence, in this care of our countrymen, acts through a human medium, the objects of that care must, in like manner, be more inclined towards a grateful love of their fellow-men. Thus, also, do stronger ties attach the people to their country, whether while they tread its soil, or, at a distance, think of their native land as an indulgent parent, to whose arms, even they who have been imprudent and undeserving may, like the prodigal son, betake themselves, without fear of being rejected.

Such is the view of the case that would first present itself to a reflective mind; and it is in vain to show, by appeals to experience, in contrast with this view, that provisions founded upon the principle have promoted profaneness of life, and dispositions the reverse of philanthropic, by spreading idleness, selfishness, and rapacity: for these evils have arisen, not as an inevitable consequence of the principle, but for want of judgment in framing laws based upon it; and, above all, from faults in the mode of administering the law. The mischief that has grown to such a height from granting relief in cases where proper vigilance would have shown that it was not required, or in bestowing it in undue measure, will be urged by no truly enlightened statesman, as a sufficient reason for banishing the principle itself from legislation.

Let us recur to the miserable states of consciousness that it precludes.

There is a story told, by a traveller in Spain, of a female who, by a sudden shock of domestic calamity, was driven out of her senses, and ever after looked up incessantly to the sky, feeling that her fellow-creatures could do nothing for her relief. Can there be Englishmen who, with a good end in view, would, upon system, expose their brother Englishmen to a like necessity of looking upwards only; or downwards to the earth, after it shall contain no spot where the destitute can demand,

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by civil right, what by right of nature they are entitled to?

Suppose the objects of our sympathy not sunk into this blank despair, but wandering about as strangers in streets and ways, with the hope of succour from casual charity; what have we gained by such a change of scene? Woe! is the condition of the famished Northern Indian, dependent, among winter snows, upon the chance-passage of a herd of deer, from which one, if brought down by his rifle-gun, may be made the means of keeping him and his companions alive. As miserable is that of some savage Islander, who, when the land has ceased to afford him sustenance, watches for food which the waves may cast up, or in vain endeavours to extract it from the inexorable deep. But neither of these is in a state of wretchedness comparable to that, which is so often endured in civilised society: multitudes, in all ages, have known it, of whom may be said:—

'Homeless, near a thousand homes they stood,
And near a thousand tables pined, and wanted food.'

Justly might I be accused of wasting time in an uncalled-for attempt to excite the feelings of the reader, if systems of political economy, widely spread, did not impugn the principle, and if the safeguards against such extremities were left unimpaired. It is broadly asserted by many, that every man who endeavours to find work, *may* find it: were this assertion capable of being verified, there still would remain a question, what kind of work, and how far may the labourer be fit for it? For if sedentary work is to be exchanged for standing; and some light and nice exercise of the fingers, to which an artisan has been accustomed all his life, for severe labour of the arms; the best efforts would turn to little account, and occasion would be given for the unthinking and the unfeeling unwarrantably to reproach those who are put upon such employment, as idle, froward, and unworthy of relief, either by law or in any other way! Were this statement correct, there would indeed be an end of the argument, the principle here maintained would be superseded. But, alas! it is far otherwise. That principle, applicable to the benefit of all countries, is indispensable for England, upon whose coast families are perpetually deprived of their support by shipwreck, and where large masses of men are so liable to be thrown out of their ordinary means of gaining bread, by changes in commercial intercourse, subject mainly or solely to the will of foreign powers; by new discoveries in arts and manufactures; and by reckless laws, in conformity with theories of political economy, which, whether right or wrong in the abstract, have proved a scourge to tens of thousands, by the abruptness with which they have been carried into practice.

But it is urged,—refuse altogether compulsory relief to the able-bodied, and the number of those who stand in need of relief will steadily diminish through a conviction of an absolute necessity for greater forethought, and more prudent care of a man's earnings. Undoubtedly it would, but so also would it, and in a much greater degree, if the legislative provisions were retained, and parochial relief administered under the care of the upper classes, as it ought to be. For it has been invariably found, that wherever the funds have been raised and applied under the superintendence of gentlemen and substantial proprietors, acting in vestries, and as overseers, pauperism has diminished accordingly. Proper care in that quarter would effectually check what is felt in some districts to

be one of the worst evils in the poor law system, viz. the readiness of small and needy proprietors to join in imposing rates that seemingly subject them to great hardships, while, in fact, this is done with a mutual understanding, that the relief each is ready to bestow upon his still poorer neighbours will be granted to himself, or his relatives, should it hereafter be applied for.

But let us look to inner sentiments of a nobler quality, in order to know what we have to build upon. Affecting proofs occur in every one's experience, who is acquainted with the unfortunate and the indigent, of their unwillingness to derive their subsistence from aught but their own funds or labour, or to be indebted to parochial assistance for the attainment of any object, however dear to them. A case was reported, the other day, from a coroner's inquest, of a pair who, through the space of four years, had carried about their dead infant from house to house, and from lodging to lodging, as their necessities drove them, rather than ask the parish to bear the expense of its interment:—the poor creatures lived in the hope of one day being able to bury their child at their own cost. It must have been heart-rending to see and hear the mother, who had been called upon to account for the state in which the body was found, make this deposition. By some, judging coldly, if not harshly, this conduct might be imputed to an unwarrantable pride, as she and her husband had, it is true, been once in prosperity. But examples, where the spirit of independence works with equal strength, though not with like miserable accompaniments, are frequently to be found even yet among the humblest peasantry and mechanics. There is not, then, sufficient cause for doubting that a like sense of honour may be revived among the people, and their ancient habits of independence restored, without resorting to those severities which the new Poor Law Act has introduced.

But even if the surfaces of things only are to be examined, we have a right to expect that law-givers should take into account the various tempers and dispositions of mankind: while some are led, by the existence of a legislative provision, into idleness and extravagance, the economical virtues might be cherished in others by the knowledge that, if all their efforts fail, they have in the Poor Laws a 'refuge from the storm and a shadow from the heat.' Despondency and distraction are no friends to prudence: the springs of industry will relax, if cheerfulness be destroyed by anxiety; without hope men become reckless, and have a sullen pride in adding to the heap of their own wretchedness. He who feels that he is abandoned by his fellow-men will be almost irresistibly driven to care little for himself; will lose his self-respect accordingly, and with that loss what remains to him of virtue?

With all due deference to the particular experience, and general intelligence of the individuals who framed the Act, and of those who in and out of parliament have approved of and supported it; it may be said, that it proceeds too much upon the presumption that it is a labouring man's own fault if he be not, as the phrase is, beforehand with the world. But the most prudent are liable to be thrown back by sickness, cutting them off from labour, and causing to them expense: and who but has observed how distress creeps upon multitudes without misconduct of their own; and merely from a gradual fall in the price of labour, without a correspondent one in the price of provisions; so that men who may have ventured upon

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the marriage state with a fair prospect of maintaining their families in comfort and happiness, see them reduced to a pittance which no effort of theirs can increase? Let it be remembered, also, that there are thousands with whom vicious habits of expense are not the cause why they do not store up their gains; but they are generous and kind-hearted, and ready to help their kindred and friends; moreover, they have a faith in Providence that those who have been prompt to assist others, will not be left destitute, should they themselves come to need. By acting from these blended feelings, numbers have rendered themselves incapable of standing up against a sudden reverse. Nevertheless, these men, in common with all who have the misfortune to be in want, if many theorists had their wish, would be thrown upon one or other of those three sharp points of condition before adverted to, from which the intervention of law has hitherto saved them.

All that has been said tends to show how the principle contended for makes the gift of life more valuable, and has, it may be hoped, led to the conclusion that its legitimate operation is to make men worthy of that gift: in other words, not to degrade but to exalt human nature. But the subject must not be dismissed without adverting to the indirect influence of the same principle upon the moral sentiments of a people among whom it is embodied in law. In our criminal jurisprudence there is a maxim, deservedly eulogised, that it is better that ten guilty persons should escape, than that one innocent man should suffer; so, also, might it be maintained, with regard to the Poor Laws, that it is better for the interests of humanity among the people at large, that ten undeserving should partake of the funds provided, than that one morally good man, through want of relief, should either have his principles corrupted, or his energies destroyed; than that such a one should either be driven to do wrong, or be cast to the earth in utter hopelessness. In France, the English maxim of criminal jurisprudence is reversed; there, it is deemed better that ten innocent men should suffer, than one guilty escape: in France, there is no universal provision for the poor; and we may judge of the small value set upon human life in the metropolis of that country, by merely noticing the disrespect with which, after death, the body is treated, not by the thoughtless vulgar, but in schools of anatomy, presided over by men allowed to be, in their own art and in physical science, among the most enlightened in the world. In the East, where countries are overrun with population as with a weed, infinitely more respect is shown to the remains of the deceased; and what a bitter mockery is it, that this insensibility should be found where civil polity is so busy in minor regulations, and ostentatiously careful to gratify the luxurious propensities, whether social or intellectual, of the multitude! Irreligion is, no doubt, much concerned with this offensive disrespect, shown to the bodies of the dead in France; but it is mainly attributable to the state in which so many of the living are left by the absence of compulsory provision for the indigent so humanely established by the law of England.

Sights of abject misery, perpetually recurring, harden the heart of the community. In the perusal of history, and of works of fiction, we are not, indeed, unwilling to have our commiseration excited by such objects of distress as they present to us; but, in the concerns of real life, men know that such emotions are not given to be indulged for their own sakes: there, the conscience declares

to them that sympathy must be followed by action; and if there exist a previous conviction that the power to relieve is utterly inadequate to the demand, the eye shrinks from communication with wretchedness, and pity and compassion languish, like any other qualities that are deprived of their natural aliment. Let these considerations be duly weighed by those who trust to the hope that an increase of private charity, with all its advantages of superior discrimination, would more than compensate for the abandonment of those principles, the wisdom of which has been here insisted upon. How discouraging, also, would be the sense of injustice, which could not fail to arise in the minds of the well-disposed, if the burden of supporting the poor, a burden of which the selfish have hitherto by compulsion borne a share, should now, or hereafter, be thrown exclusively upon the benevolent.

By having put an end to the Slave Trade and Slavery, the British people are exalted in the scale of humanity; and they cannot but feel so, if they look into themselves, and duly consider their relation to God and their fellow-creatures. That was a noble advance; but a retrograde movement will assuredly be made, if ever the principle, which has been here defended, should be either avowedly abandoned or but ostensibly retained.

But after all, there may be little reason to apprehend permanent injury from any experiment that may be tried. On the one side will be human nature rising up in her own defence, and on the other prudential selfishness acting to the same purpose, from a conviction that, without a compulsory provision for the exigencies of the labouring multitude, that degree of ability to regulate the price of labour, which is indispensable for the reasonable interest of arts and manufactures, cannot, in Great Britain, be upheld.

II. In a poem of the foregoing collection, allusion is made to the state of the workmen congregated in manufactories. In order to relieve many of the evils to which that class of society are subject and to establish a better harmony between them and their employers, it would be well to repeal such laws as prevent the formation of joint-stock companies. There are, no doubt, many and great obstacles to the formation and salutary working of these societies, inherent in the mind of those whom they would obviously benefit. But the combinations of masters to keep down, unjustly, the price of labour would be fairly checked by them, as far as they were practicable; they would encourage economy, inasmuch as they would enable a man to draw profit from his savings, by investing them in buildings or machinery for processes of manufacture with which he was habitually connected. His little capital would then be working for him while he was at rest or asleep; he would more clearly perceive the necessity of capital for carrying on great works; he would better learn to respect the larger portions of it in the hands of others; he would be less tempted to join in unjust combinations; and, for the sake of his own property, if not for higher reasons, he would be slow to promote local disturbance, or endanger public tranquillity; he would, at least, be loth to act in that way knowingly: for it is not to be denied that such societies might be nurseries of opinions unfavourable to a mixed constitution of government, like that of Great Britain. The democratic and republican spirit which they might be apt to foster would not, however, be dangerous in itself, but only as it might act without being sufficiently

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counterbalanced, either by landed proprietorship, or by a Church extending itself so as to embrace an ever-growing and ever-shifting population of mechanics and artisans. But if the tendencies of such societies would be to make the men prosper who might belong to them, rulers and legislators should rejoice in the result, and do their duty to the state by upholding and extending the influence of that Church to which it owes, in so great a measure, its safety, its prosperity, and its glory.

This, in the temper of the present times, may be difficult, but it is become indispensable, since large towns in great numbers have sprung up, and others have increased tenfold, with little or no dependence upon the gentry and the landed proprietors; and apart from those mitigated feudal institutions, which, till of late, have acted so powerfully upon the composition of the House of Commons. Now it may be affirmed that, in quarters where there is not an attachment to the Church, or the landed aristocracy, and a pride in supporting them, *there* the people will dislike both, and be ready, upon such incitements as are perpetually recurring, to join in attempts to overthrow them. There is no neutral ground here: from want of due attention to the state of society in large towns and manufacturing districts, and ignorance or disregard of these obvious truths, innumerable well-meaning persons became zealous supporters of a Reform Bill, the qualities and powers of which, whether destructive or constructive, they would otherwise have been afraid of; and even the framers of that bill, swayed as they might be by party resentments and personal ambition, could not have gone so far, had not they too been lamentably ignorant or neglectful of the same truths both of fact and philosophy.

But let that pass; and let no opponent of the bill be tempted to compliment his own foresight, by exaggerating the mischiefs and dangers that have sprung from it: let not time be wasted in profitless regrets; and let those party distinctions vanish to their very names that have separated men who, whatever course they may have pursued, have ever had a bond of union in the wish to save the limited monarchy, and those other institutions that have, under Providence, rendered for so long a period of time this country the happiest and worthiest of which there is any record since the foundation of civil society.

III. A philosophic mind is best pleased when looking at religion in its spiritual bearing; as a guide of conduct, a solace under affliction, and a support amid the instabilities of mortal life: but the Church having been forcibly brought by political considerations to my notice, while treating of the labouring classes, I cannot forbear saying a few words upon that momentous topic.

There is a loud clamour for extensive change in that department. The clamour would be entitled to more respect if they who are the most eager to swell it with their voices were not generally the most ignorant of the real state of the Church, and the service it renders to the community. *Reform* is the word employed. Let us pause and consider what sense it is apt to carry, and how things are confounded by a lax use of it. The great religious Reformation, in the sixteenth century, did not profess to be a new construction, but a restoration of something fallen into decay, or put out of sight. That familiar and justifiable use of the word seems to have paved the way for fallacies with respect to the term reform, which it is difficult to escape from. Were we to speak of improvement, and the

correction of abuses, we should run less risk of being deceived ourselves, or of misleading others. We should be less likely to fall blindly into the belief, that the change demanded is a renewal of something that has existed before, and that, therefore, we have experience on our side; nor should we be equally tempted to beg the question, that the change for which we are eager must be advantageous. From generation to generation, men are the dupes of words; and it is painful to observe, that so many of our species are most tenacious of those opinions which they have formed with the least consideration. They who are the readiest to meddle with public affairs, whether in church or state, fly to generalities, that they may be eased from the trouble of thinking about particulars; and thus is deputed to mechanical instrumentality the work which vital knowledge only can do well.

'Abolish pluralities, have a resident incumbent in every parish,' is a favourite cry; but, without adverting to other obstacles in the way of this specious scheme, it may be asked what benefit would accrue from its indiscriminate adoption to counterbalance the harm it would introduce, by nearly extinguishing the order of curates, unless the revenues of the church should grow with the population, and be greatly increased in many thinly peopled districts, especially among the parishes of the North.

The order of curates is so beneficial, that some particular notice of it seems to be required in this place. For a church poor as, relatively to the numbers of people, that of England is, and probably will continue to be, it is no small advantage to have youthful servants, who will work upon the wages of hope and expectation. Still more advantageous is it to have, by means of this order, young men scattered over the country, who being more detached from the temporal concerns of the benefice, have more leisure for improvement and study, and are less subject to be brought into secular collision with those who are under their spiritual guardianship. The curate, if he reside at a distance from the incumbent, undertakes the requisite responsibilities of a temporal kind, in that modified way which prevents him, as a new-comer, from being charged with selfishness: while it prepares him for entering upon a benefice of his own, with something of a suitable experience. If he should act under and in co-operation with a resident incumbent, the gain is mutual. His studies will probably be assisted; and his training, managed by a superior, will not be liable to relapse in matters of prudence, seamliness, or in any of the highest cares of his functions; and by way of return for these benefits to the pupil, it will often happen that the zeal of a middle-aged or declining incumbent will be revived, by being in near communion with the ardour of youth, when his own efforts may have languished through a melancholy consciousness that they have not produced as much good among his flock as, when he first entered upon the charge, he fondly hoped.

Let one remark, and that not the least important, be added. A curate, entering for the first time upon his office, comes from college after a course of expense, and with such inexperience in the use of money, that, in his new situation, he is apt to fall unawares into pecuniary difficulties. If this happens to him, much more likely is it to happen to the youthful incumbent; whose relations, to his parishioners and to society, are more complicated; and, his income being larger and independent of another, a costlier style of living is required of him by public opinion. If embarrass-

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ment should ensue, and with that unavoidably some loss of respectability, his future usefulness will be proportionably impaired: not so with the curate, for he can easily remove and start afresh with a stock of experience and an unblemished reputation; whereas the early indiscretions of an incumbent being rarely forgotten, may be impediments to the efficacy of his ministry for the remainder of his life. The same observations would apply with equal force to doctrine. A young minister is liable to errors, from his notions being either too lax or overstrained. In both cases it would prove injurious that the error should be remembered, after study and reflection, with advancing years, shall have brought him to a clearer discernment of the truth, and better judgment in the application of it.

It must be acknowledged that, among the regulations of ecclesiastical polity, none at first view are more attractive than that which prescribes for every parish a resident incumbent. How agreeable to picture to one's self, as has been done by poets and romance-writers, from Chaucer down to Goldsmith, a man devoted to his ministerial office, with not a wish or a thought ranging beyond the circuit of its cares! Nor is it in poetry and fiction only that such characters are found; they are scattered, it is hoped not sparingly, over real life, especially in sequestered and rural districts, where there is but small influx of new inhabitants, and little change of occupation. The spirit of the Gospel, unaided by acquisitions of profane learning and experience in the world,—that spirit, and the obligations of the sacred office may, in such situations, suffice to effect most of what is needful. But for the complex state of society that prevails in England, much more is required, both in large towns, and in many extensive districts of the country. A minister there should not only be irreproachable in manners and morals, but accomplished in learning, as far as is possible without sacrifice of the least of his pastoral duties. As necessary, perhaps more so, is it that he should be a citizen as well as a scholar; thoroughly acquainted with the structure of society, and the constitution of civil government, and able to reason upon both with the most expert; all ultimately in order to support the truths of Christianity, and to diffuse its blessings.

A young man coming fresh from the place of his education, cannot have brought with him these accomplishments; and if the scheme of equalising church incomes, which many advisers are much bent upon, be realised, so that there should be little or no secular inducement for a clergyman to desire a removal from the spot where he may chance to have been first set down; surely not only opportunities for obtaining the requisite qualifications would be diminished, but the motives for desiring to obtain them would be proportionably weakened. And yet these qualifications are indispensable for the diffusion of that knowledge, by which alone the political philosophy of the New Testament can be rightly expounded, and its precepts adequately enforced. In these times, when the press is daily exercising so great a power over the minds of the people, for wrong or for right as may happen, that preacher ranks among the first of benefactors who, without stooping to the direct treatment of current politics and passing events, can furnish infallible guidance through the delusions that surround them; and who, appealing to the sanctions of Scripture, may place the grounds of its injunctions in so clear a light, that disaffection shall cease to be cultivated as a laud-

able propensity, and loyalty cleansed from the dishonour of a blind and prostrate obedience.

It is not, however, in regard to civic duties alone, that this knowledge in a minister of the Gospel is important; it is still more so for softening and subduing private and personal discontents. In all places, and at all times, men have gratuitously troubled themselves, because their survey of the dispensations of Providence has been partial and narrow; but now that readers are so greatly multiplied, men judge as they are *taught*, and repinings are engendered everywhere, by imputations being cast upon the government; and are prolonged or aggravated by being ascribed to misconduct or injustice in rulers, when the individual himself only is in fault. If a Christian pastor be competent to deal with these humours, as they may be dealt with, and by no members of society so successfully, both from more frequent and more favourable opportunities of intercourse, and by aid of the authority with which he speaks; he will be a teacher of moderation, a dispenser of the wisdom that blunts approaching distress by submission to God's will, and lightens, by patience, grievances which cannot be removed.

We live in times when nothing, of public good at least, is generally acceptable, but what we believe can be traced to preconceived intention, and specific acts and formal contrivances of human understanding. A Christian instructor thoroughly accomplished would be a standing restraint upon such presumptuousness of judgment, by impressing the truth that—

'In the unreasoning progress of the world
A wiser spirit is at work for us,
A better eye than ours.'—*MS.*

Revelation points to the purity and peace of a future world; but our sphere of duty is upon earth; and the relations of impure and conflicting things to each other must be understood, or we shall be perpetually going wrong, in all but goodness of intention; and goodness of intention will itself relax through frequent disappointment. How desirable, then, is it, that a minister of the Gospel should be versed in the knowledge of existing facts, and be accustomed to a wide range of social experience! Nor is it less desirable for the purpose of counterbalancing and tempering in his own mind that ambition with which spiritual power is as apt to be tainted as any other species of power which men covet or possess.

It must be obvious that the scope of the argument is to discourage an attempt which would introduce into the Church of England an equality of income, and station, upon the model of that of Scotland. The sounder part of the Scottish nation know what good their ancestors derived from their church, and feel how deeply the living generation is indebted to it. They respect and love it, as accommodated in so great a measure to a comparatively poor country, through the far greater portion of which prevails a uniformity of employment; but the acknowledged deficiency of theological learning among the clergy of that church is easily accounted for by this very equality. What else may be wanting there, it would be unpleasant to inquire, and might prove invidious to determine: one thing, however, is clear; that in all countries the temporalities of the Church Establishment should bear an analogy to the state of society, otherwise it cannot diffuse its influence through the whole community. In a country so rich and luxurious as England, the character of its clergy must unavoidably sink, and their influence

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be everywhere impaired, if individuals from the upper ranks, and men of leading talents, are to have no inducements to enter into that body but such as are purely spiritual. And this 'tinge of secularity' is no reproach to the clergy, nor does it imply a deficiency of spiritual endowments. Parents and guardians, looking forward to sources of honourable maintenance for their children and wards, often direct their thoughts early towards the church, being determined partly by outward circumstances, and partly by indications of seriousness, or intellectual fitness. It is natural that a boy or youth, with such a prospect before him, should turn his attention to those studies, and be led into those habits of reflection, which will in some degree tend to prepare him for the duties he is hereafter to undertake. As he draws nearer to the time when he will be called to these duties, he is both led and compelled to examine the Scriptures. He becomes more and more sensible of their truth. Devotion grows in him; and what might begin in temporal considerations, will end (as in a majority of instances we trust it does) in a spiritual-mindedness not unworthy of that Gospel, the lessons of which he is to teach, and the faith of which he is to inculcate. Not inappositely may be here repeated an observation which, from its obviousness and importance, must have been frequently made, viz. that the impoverishing of the clergy, and bringing their incomes much nearer to a level, would not cause them to become less worldly-minded: the emoluments, howsoever reduced, would be as eagerly sought for, but by men from lower classes in society; men who, by their manners, habits, abilities, and the scanty measure of their attainments, would unavoidably be less fitted for their station, and less competent to discharge its duties.

Visionary notions have in all ages been afloat upon the subject of best providing for the clergy; notions which have been sincerely entertained by good men, with a view to the improvement of that order, and eagerly caught at and dwelt upon, by the designing, for its degradation and disparagement. Some are beguiled by what they call the *voluntary system*, not seeing (what stares one in the face at the very threshold) that they who stand in most need of religious instruction are unconscious of the want, and therefore cannot reasonably be expected to make any sacrifices in order to supply it. Will the licentious, the sensual, and the depraved, take from the means of their gratifications and pursuits, to support a discipline that cannot advance without uprooting the trees that bear the fruit which they devour so greedily? Will they pay the price of that seed whose harvest is to be reaped in an invisible world? A voluntary system for the religious exigencies of a people numerous and circumstanced as we are! Not more absurd would it be to expect that a knot of boys should draw upon the pittance of their pocket-money to build schools, or out of the abundance of their discretion be able to select fit masters to teach and keep them in order! Some, who clearly perceive the incompetence and folly of such a scheme for the agricultural part of the people, nevertheless think it feasible in large towns, where the rich might subscribe for the religious instruction of the poor. Alas! they know little of the thick darkness that spreads over the streets and alleys of our large towns. The parish of Lambeth, a few years since, contained not more than one church and three or four small proprietary chapels, while dissenting chapels, of every denomination were still more scantily found there; yet the in-

habitants of the parish amounted at that time to upwards of 50,000. Were the parish church and the chapels of the Establishment existing there, an *impediment* to the spread of the Gospel among that mass of people? Who shall dare to say so? But if any one, in the face of the fact which has just been stated, and in opposition to authentic reports to the same effect from various other quarters, should still contend, that a voluntary system is sufficient for the spread and maintenance of religion, we would ask, what kind of religion? wherein would it differ, among the many, from deplorable fanaticism?

For the preservation of the Church Establishment, all men, whether they belong to it or not, could they perceive their true interest, would be strenuous: but how inadequate are its provisions for the needs of the country! and how much is it to be regretted that, while its zealous friends yield to alarms on account of the hostility of dissent, they should so much over-rate the danger to be apprehended from that quarter, and almost overlook the fact that hundreds of thousands of our fellow-countrymen, though formally and nominally of the Church of England, never enter her places of worship, neither have they communication with her ministers! This deplorable state of things was partly produced by a decay of zeal among the rich and influential, and partly by a want of due expansive power in the constitution of the Establishment as regulated by law. Private benefactors, in their efforts to build and endow churches, have been frustrated, or too much impeded by legal obstacles: these, where they are unreasonable or unfitted for the times, ought to be removed; and, keeping clear of intolerance and injustice, means should be used to render the presence and powers of the church commensurate with the wants of a shifting and still-increasing population.

This cannot be effected, unless the English Government vindicate the truth, that, as her church exists for the benefit of all (though not in equal degree), whether of her communion or not, all should be made to contribute to its support. If this ground be abandoned, cause will be given to fear that a moral wound may be inflicted upon the heart of the English people, for which a remedy cannot be speedily provided by the utmost efforts which the members of the Church will themselves be able to make.

But let the friends of the church be of good courage. Powers are at work, by which, under Divine Providence, she may be strengthened and the sphere of her usefulness extended; not by alterations in her Liturgy, accommodated to this or that demand of finical taste, nor by cutting off this or that from her articles or Canons, to which the scrupulous or the overweening may object. Covert schism, and open nonconformity, would survive after alterations, however promising in the eyes of those whose subtlety had been exercised in making them. Latitudinarianism is the parhelion of liberty of conscience, and will ever successfully lay claim to a divided worship. Among Presbyterians, Socinians, Baptists, and Independents, there will always be found numbers who will tire of their several creeds, and some will come over to the Church. Conventicles may disappear, congregations in each denomination may fall into decay or be broken up, but the conquests which the National Church ought chiefly to aim at, lie among the thousands and tens of thousands of the unhappy outcasts who grow up with no religion at all. The wants of these cannot but be feelingly remembered. Whatever may be the disposition of

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the new constituencies under the reformed parliament, and the course which the men of their choice may be inclined or compelled to follow, it may be confidently hoped that individuals acting in their private capacities, will endeavour to make up for the deficiencies of the legislature. Is it too much to expect that proprietors of large estates, where the inhabitants are without religious instruction, or where it is sparingly supplied, will deem it their duty to take part in this good work; and that thriving manufacturers and merchants will, in their several neighbourhoods, be sensible of the like obligation, and act upon it with generous rivalry?

Moreover, the force of public opinion is rapidly increasing: and some may bend to it, who are not so happy as to be swayed by a higher motive; especially they who derive large incomes from lay-impropriations, in tracts of country where ministers are few and meagrely provided for. A claim still stronger may be acknowledged by those who, round their superb habitations, or elsewhere, walk over vast estates which were lavished upon their ancestors by royal favouritism or purchased at insignificant prices after church-spoliation; such proprietors, though not conscience-stricken (there is no call for that) may be prompted to make a return for which their tenants and dependents will learn to bless their names. An impulse has been given; an accession of means from these several sources, co-operating with a well-considered change in the distribution of some parts of the property at present possessed by the church, a change scrupulously founded upon due respect to law and justice, will, we trust, bring about so much of what her friends desire, that the rest may be calmly waited for, with thankfulness for what shall have been obtained.

Let it not be thought unbecoming in a layman, to have treated at length a subject with which the clergy are more intimately conversant. All may, without impropriety, speak of what deeply concerns all; nor need an apology be offered for going over ground which has been trod before so ably and so often: without pretending, however, to anything of novelty, either in matter or manner, something may have been offered to view, which will save the writer from the imputation of having little to recommend his labour, but goodness of intention.

It was with reference to thoughts and feelings expressed in verse, that I entered upon the above notices, and with verse I will conclude. The passage is extracted from my MSS. written above thirty years ago: it turns upon the individual dignity which humbleness of social condition does not preclude, but frequently promotes. It has no direct bearing upon clubs for the discussion of public affairs, nor upon political or trade-unions; but if a single workman—who, being a member of one of those clubs, runs the risk of becoming an agitator, or who, being enrolled in a union, must

be left without a will of his own, and therefore a slave—should read these lines, and be touched by them, I should indeed rejoice, and little would I care for losing credit as a poet with intemperate critics, who think differently from me upon political philosophy or public measures, if the sober-minded admit that, in general views, my affections have been moved, and my imagination exercised, under and for the guidance of reason.

'Here might I pause, and bend in reverence
To Nature, and the power of human minds;
To men as they are men within themselves.
How oft high service is performed within,
'When all the external man is rude in show:
Not like a temple rich with pomp and gold,
But a mere mountain chapel that protects
Its simple worshippers from sun and shower!
Of these, said I, shall be my song: of these,
If future years mature me for the task,
Will I record the praises, making verse
Deal boldly with substantial things—in truth
And sanctity of passion, speak of these.
That justice may be done, obsequence paid
Where it is due. Thus haply shall I teach,
Inspire, through unadulterated ears
Pour rapture, tenderness, and hope; my theme
No other than the very heart of man,
As found among the best of those who live,
Not unexalted by religious faith,
Nor uninformed by books, good books, though few.

In Nature's presence: thence may I select
Sorrow that is not sorrow, but delight,
And miserable love that is not pain
To hear of, for the glory that redounds
Therefrom to human kind, and what we are
Be mine to follow with no timid step
Where knowledge leads me: It shall be my pride
That I have dared to tread this holy ground,
Speaking no dream, but things oracular,
Matter not lightly to be heard by those
Who to the letter of the outward promise
Do read the invisible soul; by men adroit
In speech, and for communion with the world
Accomplished, minds whose faculties are then
Most active when they are most eloquent,
And elevated most when most admired.
Men may be found of other mould than these;
Who are their own upholders, to themselves
Encouragement and energy, and will;
Expressing liveliest thoughts in lively words
As native passion dictates. Others, too,
There are, among the walks of homely life,
Still higher, men for contemplation framed;
Shy, and unpractised in the strife of phrase;
Meek men, whose very souls perhaps would sink
Beneath them, summoned to such intercourse.
Theirs is the language of the heavens, the power,
The thought, the image, and the silent joy:
Words are but under-agents in their souls;
When they are grasping with their greatest strength
They do not breathe among them; this I speak
In gratitude to God, who feeds our hearts
For his own service, knoweth, loveth us,
When we are unregarded by the world.'

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